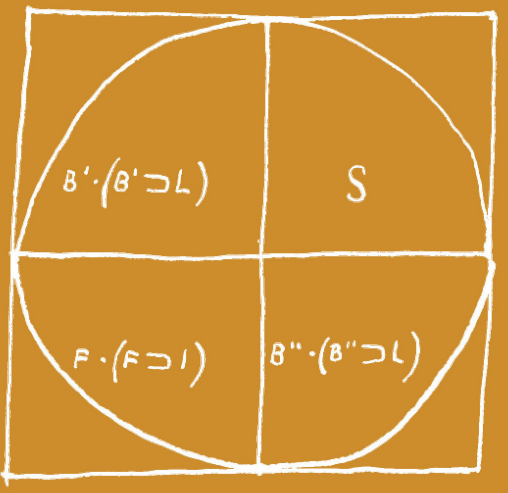
JENSEN

THERE EXISTS AN X

# X IS A SANDWICH




JOEL K JENSEN, PhD

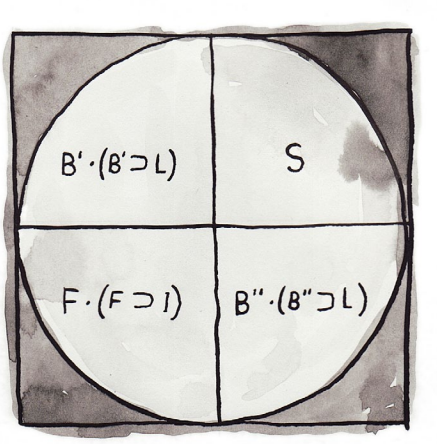
THERE EXISTS AN X X IS A SANDWICH

SANDWICH BAR PRESS

THERE EXISTS an X
X is a SANDWICH

# There Exists an X
# X is a Sandwich

Joel K Jensen, PhD



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"I SAY YES, NO, AND I SAY MONEY, MONEY, MONEY,
AND I SAY TURKEY SANDWICH AND I SAY GRAPE JUICE."

# 1: Preliminaries

*"Indeed it is well said, in every object there is inexhaustible meaning; the eye sees in it what the eye has means of seeing."*

*Thomas Carlyle*[1]

*"Money, money, money… hot dog. I say yes, no and I say money, money, money and I say turkey sandwich and I say grape juice."*

*Carmen Miranda*[2]

What is a sandwich? Hold an image in your head. Your image may be conjured from memory, a favorite or memorable exemplar from a past lunch, or, knowing the formula, you may have constructed the image anew. Even better if you have procured an actual sandwich, set just to the periphery, anchoring your reading eye. What do you see? Peanut butter and jelly? Grilled cheese? Something more unusual, perhaps pears, brie, toasted walnuts and watercress on a baguette? Pickle and Swiss with mayo on white bread can be nice. Or maybe a Denver? They're all sandwiches, without any doubt, but what do they have in common? Can we indicate a quality or qualities by which their identity is distinguished? What makes them sandwiches? What informs us as to the nature of what lies on the plate before us—the sandwichness? Ingredients? The

[1]Carlyle, Thomas. *The French Revolution: A History*. NY: Random House, Modern Library Fiction, 2002, p.6

[2]Reported to have been Carmen Miranda's first words to the gathered crowd upon disembarking from the S.S. Uruguay on her first trip to the United States.

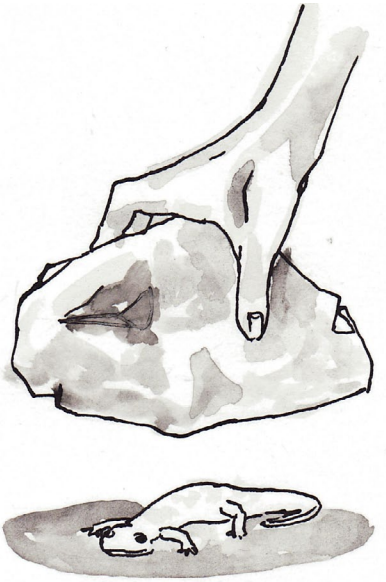
construction, by which two slices of bread hold something more? The means of eating, whether we rely on our hands alone or employ knife and fork? The context, in which a sliced loaf in a plastic bag lies open on the counter? Is it the sign on the drive-through menu? *What is a sandwich?*

At a minimum, a sandwich is an *object*. An object of scrutiny, an object of affection. An object of our appetites, of our attention, of study, of puzzlement, of beauty or efficiency, of currency or paradox, in short, an object of art. You may have in mind a vulgar pretention, an "objet" suited more for the pedestal then the belly. Or perhaps a gravy-stained and overstuffed object of gluttony, with a side of fries, consumed in the incomparable vinyl booth of a greasy spoon. More likely, though more mundanely, you may be thinking of an object of temporary satiation, whether procured in the home kitchen or by the employee lounge's vending dispensary, the snack that allows one to get quickly back to other tasks. But a few words about objects…

Any object having extension in space has, it seems, boundaries. It has extension and definition, properties of such and such a kind, it is identifiable to its students and consumers. Our task to discover just what those characteristics are that the sandwich consists in. The boundaries will be marked and enumerated, to afford clarity and understanding to what they contain. To that end, we will take as our method a logical analysis.

Our endeavor, at least in part, is to consider Thomas Carlyle's proposition, quoted at the beginning, earnestly. Was Carlyle was a bread and meat man? I'm sure I don't know. We do know that Mr. Carlyle maintained a correspondence with *the* Lady Sandwich in the 1850s, but, alas, this occurred roughly a century after the appearance of the sandwich as such, after the good Earl of Sandwich, one John Montagu, lent his esteemed title to the pairing of meat and sliced bread. So, the Lady Sandwich known to Carlyle was not the Lady Sandwich, but another Lady Sandwich of the same name. The bottom line is that there is no reason to think that Carlyle and her Ladyship's correspondence concerned snacking, mealtimes, or cuisine of any kind. It should be noted in passing, however, that I have not viewed the relevant letters, so my presumption may indeed be presumptuous. We can with certainty say, though, that Carlyle's oft-quoted line referred not to food at all, but to History, and more specifically to the sick-room of Louis the XV (though the line appears in Carlyle's text in uncited quotes – any possibility that the original source from which Carlyle borrowed concerned sandwiches? Let's not be overly hopeful).

And consider the above quote from Ms. Miranda. If the quote appears baffling, this may simply be due to the usual association of Ms. Miranda with bananas. Why turkey sandwiches and grape juice? The words should remind us that the sandwich for us remains iconic, and as such not wholly reducible to historical-philosophical explication. At the same time, the sandwich is indispensable. The quote came in response to reporters' questions as she first



WE'RE REVEALING THE SANDWICH AS ONE REVEALS A SALAMANDER UNDER A ROCK.

appeared on the American cultural scene, demonstrating her limited knowledge of English. Notice, however, as Ms. Miranda was undoubtedly aware, that the joke is on us: if one wants to get along in America one needs to know the parlance – money, hotdogs, sandwiches.

Finally, it is worth establishing what this monograph is not. There will be no recipes included herein. No tips for "ensuring success" or "saving dinner", no "making meal times happy times" or advice on "putting zest in the boys' tailgater". Now, don't misunderstand me here. The boys' tailgater should indeed be zesty; that advice is indispensable, but you won't find it here. *Better Homes and Gardens* addressed this need admirably years ago, and the advice is updated continually for us, over the airwaves or ready-to-hand in the checkout line at the grocer's. But our purpose is far more subtle and elusive: to discover what a sandwich *means*.

# 2: Proofs

What constitutes a sandwich, and what are its variations? Sandwiches take so many forms that a catalogue of types would render an encyclopedia. This is true even if we stick to a very simple formulation: two slices of bread with meat. Any extension of the term beyond this equation yields yet more results. But as we'll see, not everything which might be termed a sandwich really qualifies. If we want to discover the importance of the sandwich, and, further, its *meaning*, we'll need to decide what reliably counts and what does not. What makes for a "true" sandwich, and what is excluded?

To discover how our object is demarcated, we will begin with clear exemplars, and then move on to counterexamples. So, what unarguably counts as a sandwich? Well, two slices of Roman Meal holding pimento loaf certainly qualifies, with or without mustard. Not a good sandwich, but it grants us a start. What else? Rueben? Ham and Swiss? Turkey curry? Club? Grilled cheese? French dip? Well, probably, but already problems are appearing. Meat seems not to be a requirement, as evidenced by the grilled cheese. Both the grilled cheese and the Rueben tell us that the sandwich may be cooked in its entirety, or, as with the French dip, have cooked filling but uncooked bread. With a French dip also, there is an accompaniment: the dip. So a sandwich need not be intended as a stand alone. And if a club sandwich qualifies, then we aren't limited to just two slices of bread. And if a third is acceptable, why not a fourth?

We're getting ahead of ourselves already, so let us take a step backward and assert the following formula as a starting point: *some entity is a sandwich when that given entity consists of two slices of bread on either side of a filling*. This beginning seems to have at least prima facie reliability, as per our common use of the word sandwich. We will apply this formula against counterexamples, discover its effectiveness, and make modifications as needed. As with any

scientific inquiry, our findings must be falsifiable. If a sandwich proper is later discovered not to fit the mold, the mold will be cast anew.

Formalized, we have the following:

$$S \equiv \{(B' \cdot B'') \cdot [F \cdot (F \supset I)]\}$$

In the foregoing, S indicates a sandwich, B′ indicates the first slice of bread, B″ indicates the second slice of bread, F indicates filling, and I indicates a location between the two slices of bread. We can read the formula in the following way: S is a sandwich if and only if S consists of one slice of bread, another slice of bread, and filling, and if filling is present, it is contained (inside the sandwich).

Stated as an argument, with premises and conclusion, we have:

1) $S \equiv \{(B' \cdot B'') \cdot [F \cdot (F \supset I)]\}$
2) $B'$
3) $B''$
4) $F$
5) $I$ / $S$

To demonstrate deductively that when some given object fulfilling the premises above is indeed a sandwich, we have:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1) $S \equiv \{(B' \cdot B'') \cdot [F \cdot (F \supset I)]\}$ | | |
| 2) $B'$ | | |
| 3) $B''$ | | |
| 4) $F$ | | |
| 5) $I$ / $S$ | | |
| 6) $B' \cdot B''$ | 2,3 Conj | |
| 7) $F$ | ACP | |
| 8) $I \vee I$ | 5, Add | |
| 9) $I$ | 8, Taut | |
| 10) $F \supset I$ | 7-9 CP | |
| 11) $F \cdot (F \supset I)$ | 4, 10 Conj | |
| 12) $(B' \cdot B'') \cdot [F \cdot (F \supset I)]$ | 6, 11 Conj | |
| 13) $\langle S \supset \{(B' \cdot B'') \cdot [F \cdot (F \supset I)]\}\rangle \cdot \langle \{(B' \cdot B'') \cdot [F \cdot (F \supset I)]\} \supset S\rangle$ | 1, Equiv | |
| 14) $\langle \{(B' \cdot B'') \cdot [F \cdot (F \supset I)]\} \supset S\rangle \cdot \langle S \supset \{(B' \cdot B'') \cdot [F \cdot (F \supset I)]\}\rangle$ | 13, Com | |
| 15) $\{(B' \cdot B'') \cdot [F \cdot (F \supset I)]\} \supset S$ | 14, Simp | |
| 16) $S$ | 12, 15 MP | |

As an aside, it should be said that any deductive proof in propositional logic expresses truth only insofar as its premises are reliable. If the premises do not tell us the truth, then the conclusion is empty. The rules of deduction

alert us only to any inconsistencies in our thinking, but they don't tell us about the really existing world, or, in this case, about really existing sandwiches in that really existing world. We're told by proverb that the "proof is in the pudding". This phrase is a hopeless muddle (the proof of what is in the pudding?) unless we recall the original intent – the proof of the pudding is in the eating. Surely something of the same may be said regarding sandwiches. But, if the premises we've given read true, our logic will stand us on solid ground, whatever else the taste buds may tell us. All this being said, the sandwich proof demonstrated here may not be satisfactorily exhaustive (that is, not exhaustively exhaustive), even if due precisely to the argument's objective rigidity. But more on this point later.
With the deductive proof above given, prospective sandwiches may be tested against our theory. As an example, consider a grilled cheese. If the grilled cheese in question indeed has two slices of bread, between which cheese is contained, then the grilled cheese is a sandwich. This comports with our usual expectations. It matters not, then, whether the cheese grilled is American, Cheddar, or Roquefort, whether the bread is Wonder or pumpernickel, or whether the sandwich is served with a gherkin or a bag of barbeque crisps. Also, as per the proof above, ingredients can be added, such that one could prepare a grilled cheese with, say, tomatoes and spinach, and the result will still qualify as a sandwich (and not only a sandwich, but, yet, a grilled cheese).

It may be worth inserting here that the paradigmatic grilled cheese sandwich contains American cheese. Such a sandwich may or may not be the "best" incarnation of a grilled cheese sandwich (though I, for one, am willing to defend it), but it likely conforms to the formal image in many people's remembrance. It is important, however, that the parameters by which a legitimate grilled cheese, or any other sandwich, is bounded, should not be defined too strictly. It may be that the first image occurring in the mind's eye, when asked to consider a grilled cheese, is that of spongy white bread with American cheese, however, it seems undeniable that a sandwich of grilled pain au chocolate with Limburger is also a grilled cheese. An outer demarcation must be given, however. A presumed grilled cheese made with nondairy cheese substitute, such as an almond or hemp derivative, is by definition, not a grilled cheese. It is a grilled non-cheese (but still a sandwich).

Our definition allows in not just grilled cheese, but a host of other presumed sandwiches. Some examples, in increasing level of complexity:

1. Bacon Butty: white bread, bacon.
2. Peanut Butter and Jelly: a rite of childhood, any kind of bread, any kind of jelly, chunky or creamy.
3. Hamburger Sandwich: just what you think it is.
4. Tuna Melt: albacore, bluefin, or otherwise; cheddar, American, or otherwise.

5. Ploughman's: cheese, pickle and bread.
6. Bun Kabob: fried spiced lentil patty, onions and chutney and/or raita, hamburger bun.
7. Roti John: baguette, minced meat, onion, egg, sardines, tomato-chili sauce.
8. Muffuletta: Sicilian round, olive salad, capicola, mortadella, ementaler, provolone.

Another aside: as per example 3, above, yes, the hamburger is not only a sandwich, but a hamburger sandwich. There continues to be extended debate about the status of the hamburger, but the question is an empty one. The problem seems to be that the "hamburger" has, to some lights, become a distinct entity, no longer "merely" a sandwich. Sure, I'll concede that much, but it serves to suggest only that a hamburger is a hamburger. We shouldn't think that the two categories are mutually exclusive; it may be a hamburger, but it is also a hamburger sandwich. A conjunction without De Morgan's negation ($[H \cdot S]$ vs. $\sim[H \cdot S]$). To simply things, let's defer to the proof. If it fulfills all the premises, then it is de facto a sandwich, whatever else it may be. A hamburger by any other name…

For all the above examples, our proof thus far serves us well. It opens the door to those food items we prima facie describe as sandwiches, as we well think it ought. The real test of the proof's strength, however, will be the consideration of those recipes it disallows. Let us consider now the strength of several significant objections:

Objection 1:

*If there is only one slice of bread, is the food still a sandwich?*

We might refer to this as the smørrebrød dilemma. The sandwich proof above rejects the Danish smørrebrød. Here we have a single slice of bread with toppings, or palaeg, typically called an "open-faced sandwich" in England and America Does this count as a sandwich proper? The term "open-faced" as a qualifier may itself be telling; it suggests that the food in question is not a "normal" sandwich, or at least not the kind of sandwich whose identity is sufficiently obvious enough to need no qualification. On the other hand, our use of language is inconsistent on this score. For instance, Americans continue to refer to "tuna fish", instead of the simpler, but sufficiently clear, "tuna". And why should this be? Does there linger in our consciousness the expectation that there could be a non-fish tuna? The use of qualifiers is indicative, but only so far. In this case at least, it is not decisive. (And incidentally, why the open "face"? Implying that an ordinary sandwich has a "closed" face? But then the metaphor seems lost; is the ordinary sandwich likened to the wearing of a veil?). Smørrebrød does not

qualify as a sandwich, its open-facedness notwithstanding. As a set of premises, smørrebrød would be listed in the following way:

1) $S \equiv \{(B' \cdot B'') \cdot [F \cdot (F \supset I)]\}$
2) $B'$
3) F / S

Clearly, this set of premises would not validly lead to conclusion S (even if B″ and I are added by way of the Addition rule, this would irremediably yield a disjunction, not the necessary conjunction). So, how should we regard this result? Is this evidence that our proof is reliable, or that our premises are inadequate? The proof remains thus far reliable. If we were to include the smørrebrød, and thus alter the terms of our proof, it would lead to a reductio ad absurdum. For instance, notice what other inclusions would have to be made if the smørrebrød were to be included. Welsh rabbit, which consists of bread and savory cheese sauce served open-faced would have to be included, as would the hot brown, popularized in Kentucky and consisting of open-faced bread with turkey, bacon and mornay sauce, broiled (though incidentally, the hot brown is in fact frequently referred to by those who eat it as a sandwich). Those two sound like they are not too far removed from the spirit of a sandwich, but notice the next two. Bruschetta would have to count, which almost no one recognizes as a sandwich, and perhaps most problematically, a slice of pizza. With these examples in mind, it is sensible to stick with the requirement that a sandwich have two slices of bread. A final note: *an open-faced sandwich is not sandwiched*. What more need be said?

Actually, more could be (and shall be) said. It is precisely the inclusion of the second piece of bread that marks the appearance of the sandwich as such. We might refer here to the sandwich's founding myth. According to the story, John Montagu, the 4th Earl of Sandwich, desired to eat a food that would not distract him from gambling with his mates. He sent his valet for meat tucked between two slices of bread, leaving his hands unencumbered by cutlery, the better to pursue his vices uninterrupted. The story remains an important one, and raises numerous questions, all of which will be answered in good time. For the time being let us note that, whatever else may be said of Montagu, he was not eating pizza.

## Objection 2:

### *Must the filling be contained between the bread (sandwiched)?*

A barbeque or soul food purveyor may serve meat unadorned, or perhaps accompanied on the side by a slice or two of white bread. Another variation

is to pile the meat and the sides all on top of one or two slices of bread. These creations, in and of themselves, are not sandwiches, even if there are indeed two slices of bread. An enterprising diner could make such a dish into a sandwich, by "sandwiching" the filling, but unless one does so explicitly, it is only bread and meat (or bread and meat and coleslaw, perhaps).

Similarly, a "turkey commercial" or "hot beef commercial" is not (generally) a sandwich. This dish, largely unknown beyond the American upper Midwest (or at least, unknown by this particular name), typically consists of one or two slices of bread, on top of which are plopped beef or turkey, mashed potatoes and gravy. In my own experience, this dish was a staple of elementary school "hot lunch". (And why this peculiar name, why "commercial"? This is apparently a culinary mystery; no one seems to know). At any rate, because the "filling" is not enclosed (and thereby does not fill), it does not qualify as a sandwich. Again, it is telling that the whole endeavor is consumed with the aid of knife and fork; one could certainly try to eat it with one's hands, but the results would be significantly qualitatively distinct from the original Montaguian experience. Picture the good Earl holding a beef commercial in his left and full house in his right. A winning hand?

A final note relevant to this objection: again, if we accept a barbeque plate into the canon, we have a reductio ad absurdum. Anything with bread as an ingredient would become a potential sandwich. Frittata? Salad with croutons? Certainly not. One might build a frittata sandwich, however, or even croutons on a baguette…

Objection 3:

*Can the bread be connected, as it is for a bun?*

We refer to this objection as the hotdog dilemma, and it is a serious one. While certain parties will be resistant to this assertion, we must conclude that a hotdog, as traditionally served, is not a sandwich. Any food served in a *connected* bun fails the proof. Thus, hotdogs and pitas are ruled out. We would not consider the hotdog to be "sandwiched" by the bun, but, rather, "held" by the bun. Perhaps "cradled", "nestled," "secured", or even "anchored", but certainly not "sandwiched". The same goes for a pita, and, indeed, for anything served in a connected bun, such as a split roll, for instance. I am aware that some dictionaries have in the past been inclusive of the split roll in the definition of a sandwich. But with all due respect to Dr. Johnson, no philosopher worth his crust yields unexamined deference to dictionaries. We forge ahead with but two reliable resources: our phenomenological experience of the world (both what we eat and how we talk about it) and the principles of logic. Dictionaries provide little of either.

At stake regarding the hotdog dilemma is the significance of the

A WINNING HAND?

"sandwiching".[3] This usage of the word reveals the tendency of certain nouns to become verbs. If we say that something is "sandwiched" we mean to say that that thing is squeezed or contained between two dissimilar things, especially if those two dissimilar things are of a similar type to one another. Thus, when I reached for my dictionary a moment ago, I found it "sandwiched" between *Molloy* and *The Gourmet Guide to Beer*. The change whereby a noun becomes a verb is known to linguists as conversion, zero derivation, or simply, verbing (note that the word verb, as a verb, refers to a class of which it is itself a member – we're getting very close to Russell's barber paradox here).[4] There is a theory that nouns become verbs when a language has no word to describe the action in question prior to the appearance of the noun. Or, more pointedly, the action in question may simply not be possible until the appearance of the thing described by the noun. Thus, while one can now google, this was only possible once there existed a Google (though, as far as I am aware we cannot yet googol or be googoled). But as concerns sandwiches, (and most other instances of zero derivation) this theory seems lacking. To illustrate, one might point out that as a noun, the word sandwich describes a food, while as a verb, the term describes the action of bringing into existence a phenomena or event, even a non-food phenomena or event, that has the structure of the thing described by the noun (a sandwich). Thereby, a sandwich is sandwiched. But, notice the problem with the theory – sandwiching occurred long before there were sandwiches. With what term, then, did we describe the activity, before sandwiching was "sandwiching"?

Notice, as another aside, that while sandwiches are sandwiched, hotdogs are not hotdogged. Hotdog is a verb, however, implying ostentatious or conspicuous clowning through the performance of stunts, and is typically associated with skiing (as per the movie *Hot Dog*, though written in this way, with a space between syllables, the title would seem to refer equally well to an animal). But why should it be that the zero derivation of hotdog holds no apparent connection to the food at all, while the opposite is true for the sandwich? Who can say. A pita or a split roll is not "hotdogged" though it displays a similarity of structure to the hotdog (and neither is a pita pita-ed, though a split roll is indeed split). Of course, a hotdog may itself be sandwiched, between bread, or even between other hotdogs. The reverse is not the case. And finally, "hotdog!" is a familiar, though infrequent, interjection. We don't similarly exclaim "sandwich!". And what could this imply if we did?

So, is the action of "sandwiching" a necessary component of the sandwich? Yes, mere folding does not qualify. (And incidentally, a winky-dink, which is a hotdog served diagonally on single slice of white bread, then folded over the

[3]Thanks to Dr. Joseph Juhasz on this point. I asked him what makes a sandwich a sandwich. He replied, without equivocation, that a sandwich has to be sandwiched.

[4]Thanks to Steve Knutsen for his insight on the behavior of verbs. You really Knutsened my essay, Steve.

meat, is not a sandwich, though it is still a hotdog. If the bread is broken in two, it becomes a sandwich, but is no longer a winky-dink.) I will be the first to admit, however, that this assertion does lead to conclusions that jar with some basic intuitions regarding this matter, and, further, that contradict some common usages of the word sandwich. We do, nevertheless, stop short of falling into a reductio ad absurdum. But consider the following troubling conclusions: inevitably, we must accept that many a banh mi is not a sandwich, and neither a lobster roll, unless of course the bun is cleanly separated. Further, a hero, grinder, sub, hoagie, torpedo, spucky, zeppelin, or Philly cheesesteak is *not* a sandwich *if the bread is not fully divided*. It is common to serve all of the foregoing on undivided bread. For instance, the "sandwiches" served at the Subway fast food outlet are not actually sandwiches at all. I know what you are thinking, dear reader, but I can offer no comfort, except that satisfaction which arises naturally from the adherence to logic and sense. Am I really claiming that the Philly is not a sandwich? I am. It is a Philly, and it is a cheesesteak, with or without Whiz, but a sandwich it is not.

The principles at stake are necessary and sufficient conditionality versus exclusivity. The qualities that make an entity a hero, grinder, sub, hoagie, torpedo, spucky, zeppelin, Philly, lobster roll, banh mi, or hotdog may or may not be sufficient (and certainly not necessary) to make that entity a sandwich. But designation as any of the foregoing does not disqualify that entity as a sandwich. Any particular token may be both, depending upon the condition of the bread. You may want to see again the above thoughts regarding hamburgers.

The bottom line is that because the premises I have laid out specify the necessity of two slices of bread, we cannot count two connected halves as distinct. Connected bread is singular, and does not have the doubling effect which is particularly emblematic of the sandwich (and more on doubling later). But the escape valve is not insignificant: a near-sandwich becomes a sandwich if the bun halves are separated, whether intentionally or accidentally. Finally, it must be asked, should we change the premises of the proof, such that no second piece of bread is requisite (by the terms of the proof, this might be done by eliminating B″, or perhaps by other means)? No. Again, this would lead to a yet more intractable reductio ad absurdum, as per the results of Objection 1 – a slice of pizza would again be a sandwich. Consider the following hypothetical: suppose I make bruschetta, but for a topping I employ Philly cheesesteak fixins. Would this be different in kind than a regular Philly cheesesteak on an unsplit roll? No – it would presumably differ in quantity, and the bread for the latter would be presumably folded over, at least to some degree. But, again, folding ≠ sandwiching. One is reminded here of the Polish zapiekanka, sometimes introduced to English speakers as a "toasted" or simply as Polish pizza. The zapiekanka, a very popular bar and after-bar food, is essentially a stale baguette with lots of melted cheese, ketchup, and mushroom sauce, and perhaps other toppings. The zapiekanka is

A STALE BAGUETTE WITH LOTS OF MELTED CHEESE, KETCHUP, AND MUSHROOM SAUCE

emblematic of the middle ground between sandwich and pizza – it is neither but has a family resemblance to both.

Objection 4:

*What counts as bread?*

The premises laid out in the proof above are no help to us here. They assert that a sandwich must have two separate slices of bread, but they give no specification to the properties necessary to qualify a candidate as bread proper. My strict assertion regarding this point is the following: a sandwich only counts as such if the bread is leavened. Formalized, we have: $[(B' \vee B'') \equiv L]$, where $B'$ and $B''$ are as above and $L$ = leavened. We can read the foregoing formula in the following way: the first or second slice of bread is bread if and only if leavened. Unleavened bread, while certainly bread in some sense, does not a sandwich make. Why such strict boundaries? Again, to avoid a reductio, as we shall see.

A necessary preliminary, which will be given only cursory treatment here concerns what counts as leavening. For instance, the prima facie distinction, by which we consider breads that have been left to rise through the action of yeast to be leavened, and breads put into the oven before the addition or attraction of yeast unleavened, is very simplified. The term leaven has no necessary connection to yeast as such, however, and suggests, rather, a lightening or raising (the word derives from the same root as our "lever"). Broadly, dough may be raised by three means: biological, chemical or mechanical. The end result of these various means is dough containing pockets of air. Yeast releases carbon dioxide into the dough as a byproduct of eating the dough's sugars. Chemical leavening agents, such as baking soda or powder, release carbon dioxide when they react with heat. Finally, dough may be physically leavened by beating air into the dough when mixing. So, with these distinctions in mind, what counts as bread, and what does not? For the time being, I will leave this question unsettled, and defer, meekly, to common usage: if we popularly consider the bread leavened, then I'm willing to accept that judgment.

To see where the leavening restriction gets us, consider the following unleavened non-sandwiches:

1. Quesadillas? Tortillas are unleavened, and thus we leave out of consideration anything "sandwiched" between tortillas. Quesadillas, of course, have two distinct pieces of "bread", but because the bread is unleavened, they are not sandwiches. As an aside, we must also leave out of consideration anything else served in a tortilla: tacos, burritos, enchiladas, fajitas, wraps, etc., though for these last examples it is clear

that they also fail to be sandwiches as per objection 1 above, as they are wrapped in one wrapper, rather than sandwiched between two. A significant footnote regarding tortillas concerns a court case heard in Massachusetts in 2006. Panera Bread Company went to court to block the opening of a Qdoba Mexican Grill in the White City shopping center of Shrewsbury. Panera operated in the mall under a clause stipulating that Panera would be the only purveyor of sandwiches on the premises. As pretense for the lawsuit, Panera asserted that tortillas were bread, and, thus, burritos, tacos, and other tortilla-contained food items, served by Qdoba, were, in fact, "sandwiches". Superior Court Judge Jeffrey Locke didn't buy the argument, ruling in brief that "A sandwich is not commonly understood to include burritos, tacos and quesadillas, which are typically made with a single tortilla and stuffed with a choice filling of meat, rice, and beans."[5] The quote above emphasizes, I think correctly, the *single* tortilla (implying an amount numerically inadequate for a sandwich) and the characterization of burritos, etc. as "stuffed" (and thus not sandwiched). However, it should also be noted that the Honorable Judge Locke's reasoning is not as clear as it might be – a quesadilla is not made with a single tortilla, but with two, and is not stuffed, but, in fact, sandwiched. If a quesadilla fails to be a sandwich it cannot be because of the reasons cited. Again, its status as non-sandwich must be due to the tortilla's lack of leavening.

2. Those orange crackers with peanut butter one can buy at the superette or gas station? Here the item in question consists of two crackers sandwiching peanut butter. Crackers are unleavened, and thus, not sandwich bread. Well, okay, I need to backtrack here. Crackers presumably are not made with yeast, and so are not in this particular sense leavened. But crackers may have baking soda. If we count baking soda as leavening, our results change.
3. Pie? Generally speaking, the crust of a pie is continuous and connected, with a top half and a bottom half (though we would certainly consider a pie lacking a top crust still to be a pie). But suppose the top and bottom crusts become separated. Has the pie become a sandwich? No; crust is unleavened.
4. Matzoh and maror? Matzoh is unleavened, thus this case is concluded swiftly.
5. Pita? Again, not a sandwich. Also fails as per objection 3.
6. S'mores? Yes, they are delicious, but they are not sandwiches. Not because they are prepared on a stick (a sandwich *could* be prepared

[5]Cited in Abelson, Jeff (2006-11-10). "Arguments Spread Thick". *The Boston Globe.*

HERE THE ITEM IN QUESTION CONSISTS OF TWO CRACKERS SANDWICHING PEANUT BUTTER

this way) but because graham crackers are unleavened (though again, this point is subject to the same concerns as for point 2 above).

7. Ice cream sandwich? No. But one could serve ice cream on pumpernickel, for instance…

Given our new stipulations regarding legitimate vs. non-legitimate sandwich bread, we need to adjust the premises of our proof. Doing so renders the following:

1) $S \equiv \{(B' \cdot B'') \cdot [F \cdot (F \supset I)]\}$
2) $B' \cdot (B' \supset L)$
3) $B'' \cdot (B'' \supset L)$
4) F
5) I / S

Premise 2 would now be read to say "A first slice of bread (exists), and if a first slice of bread (exists), then it is leavened". Premise 3 mirrors premise 2, but in reference to the second slice. With these adjustments, the proof can be solved in almost exactly the same fashion. The careful logician will notice that the solution will now be two steps longer, 18 instead of 16, due to the necessity of performing simplification twice, once each on lines 2 and 3. As a completed proof, we have the following:

1) $S \equiv \{(B' \cdot B'') \cdot [F \cdot (F \supset I)]\}$
2) $B' \cdot (B' \supset L)$
3) $B'' \cdot (B'' \supset L)$
4) F
5) I / S
6) $B'$ 2, Simp
7) $B''$ 3, Simp
8) $B' \cdot B''$ 6,7 Conj
9) F ACP
10) I v I 5, Add
11) I 10, Taut
12) $F \supset I$ 9-11 CP
13) $F \cdot (F \supset I)$ 4, 12 Conj
14) $(B' \cdot B'') \cdot [F \cdot (F \supset I)]$ 8, 13 Conj
15) $\langle S \supset \{(B' \cdot B'') \cdot [F \cdot (F \supset I)]\}\rangle \cdot \langle \{(B' \cdot B'') \cdot [F \cdot (F \supset I)]\} \supset S\rangle$ 1, Equiv
16) $\langle \{(B' \cdot B'') \cdot [F \cdot (F \supset I)]\} \supset S\rangle \cdot \langle S \supset \{(B' \cdot B'') \cdot [F \cdot (F \supset I)]\}\rangle$ 15, Com
17) $\{(B' \cdot B'') \cdot [F \cdot (F \supset I)]\} \supset S$ 16, Simp
18) S 14, 17 MP

Note also, that per this formulation of the sandwich proof, a legitimate sandwich cannot have one unleavened slice of bread and one leavened slice of bread. For instance, suppose I make a pastrami and Swiss cheese "sandwich", but with rye on one side and an orange gas station cracker on the other. This isn't a sandwich. Another benefit of the adjusted 2nd and 3rd premises is that a prospective sandwich made with unleavened bread (requiring a premise ~L, for "not leavened') will lead to a contradiction, by way of modus tollens. See the following, which would apply to an Oreo cookie, for instance:

| | |
|---|---|
| 1) $S \equiv \{(B' \cdot B'') \cdot [F \cdot (F \supset I)]\}$ | |
| 2) $B' \cdot \sim L$ | |
| 3) $B'' \cdot \sim L$ | |
| 4) $(B' \supset L)$ | |
| 5) $(B'' \supset L)$ | |
| 6) F | |
| 7) I / S | |
| 8) $B'$ | 2, Simp |
| 9) L | 4,8 MP |
| 10) $\sim L \cdot B'$ | 2, Com |
| 11) $\sim L$ | 10, Simp |
| 12) $L \cdot \sim L$ | 9, 11 Conj |

Line 12 above is a contradiction, indicating a logical impossibility. This results from the retention of premises four and five, which specify the leavening requirement, and the new inclusion of premises two and three, which indicate the existence of unleavened bread.

## Objection 5:

### *Does it matter* how *the sandwich is eaten?*

The sandwich proof as I have constructed it leads inevitably to this very important objection. Suppose I am eating something universally recognized as a sandwich. To keep it simple, let's say ham and two slices of bread. But now, further suppose that I eat with knife and fork, instead of my hands. Thus, my hands are no longer free. If, as has been alluded, the sandwich was invented in order to allow free hands, how do we regard this particular sandwich-eating behavior? It *must* still be recognized as a sandwich, even if eaten unconventionally. Indeed, as the art form known as sandwich has come into its own (particularly in its American, bigger-is-better incarnations) we now frequently encounter sandwiches which couldn't possibly be eaten with hands alone, due to their enormous size and sloppiness. Does this mean they aren't sandwiches? Not at all. The sandwich

proof, because an artifact of propositional logic, operates from the axiom that any sandwich as such consists of a set of *objective* properties. *Thus far*, we are leaving out of consideration any qualitative properties. We want to know *what* the thing is, as opposed to how the thing is (*how* it is eaten). In other words, a sandwich either is or is not a sandwich regardless of how we humans behave, what we do to the sandwich, or how we feel about it.

Okay, an interjection needs to be made here. Its beginning to sound as if I'm a Platonic realist regarding sandwiches. To the careful reader, this will seem strange considering all my exegesis on the importance of a sandwich's *meaning*. So which is it? Where are we going? Is this a dime store mystery? Does sandwichness consist in objective properties, or in meaning, or in both or neither? Bear with me; there are unanswered questions, and as we'll see, there are definite limits to the usefulness of defining a sandwich in strictly objective or quantitative terms, but we have far to go and are not yet finished with the main course.

As concerns the how of eating a sandwich, consider the following sub-problems:

1. A Belgian friend of mine always ate his hamburger sandwiches with knife and fork (and mayonnaise). He was nevertheless eating sandwiches. A sandwich is a sandwich, whether stuffed in a drawer, worn as a hat, or wedged under a wobbly table leg. Indeed, even if eaten with knife and fork. There continues to be an *insistence* in certain European circles that a sandwich be eaten with knife and fork, as eating with one's hands is considered gauche, base, common, or even rude. Thus, with knife and fork one is dining, with hands one is merely keeping starvation at bay. Witness the following passage from Harriet Welty Rochefort's memoir *French Toast*, "We hence proceeded to prepare sandwiches for lunch and serve one to my father-in-law, normally the soul of tolerance. He gazed at our creation as if it were a living creature and, upon being informed that you ate The Sandwich with your hands, commented ironically, 'Well, why don't we all get down on the floor and throw bones over our shoulders while we're at it?'"[6]. Notice also the paradox in the French psyche – burning a McDonald's has been heralded as an act of patriotic heroism, while at the same time McDonald's remains widely and increasingly popular.
2. The Vince. This is a grilled cheese prepared in the usual fashion, except that as a finishing touch gravy is ladled over the top, rendering it impossible to eat with hands. Still a sandwich? Yes.

[6]Rochefort, Harriet Welty. French Toast: An American in Paris Celebrates the Maddening Mysteries of the French (St. Martin's / Griffin: 2010).

BURNING A McDONALDS HAS BEEN HERALDED AS AN ACT OF PATRIOTIC HEROISM

3. French Dip. Here an ostensible sandwich in every other sense, is dipped into au jus. So what's the problem?

A final word regarding this objection. I suggested earlier that the requirement that smørrebrød be eaten with knife and fork is an *indicator* that smørrebrød is not a sandwich. Notice, the knife and fork is not what *makes* it a non-sandwich. Rather, the lack of one slice of bread makes it a non-sandwich. The use of knife and fork only points us in the right direction; by itself, this qualitative feature to the experience of eating is not definitive.

## Objection 6:

### *Remaining Absurdities*

Most important objections to the proof have been explained. The reader may have a few remaining questions regarding particular exemplars and exceptions. The following considerations aspire to answer those questions.

1. Suppose I have a couple roast beef sandwiches, but then I slice them into small squares, toss them in a bowl with a vinaigrette, and eat them as salad with a fork. Do I have a salad? A bowl of sandwiches? Both? Again, it does not matter *how* the sandwich is eaten, even if what was invented for the sake of efficiency is eaten in the most inefficient way possible. In this case, *if* the filling is still sandwiched between the very small slices of bread, then you have a sandwich. Or, more properly, you have a bowl of very tiny sandwiches. Further, if one is eating an ordinary lettuce salad with croutons, and through happenstance two croutons, through the random action of tossing, come to sandwich a bit of lettuce, what results is a sandwich. Thus, we can even say that the sandwich need not be *intentional*. But more on this point later.

   And finally, another word about the mathematical absurdity of tiny sandwiches. Take an ordinary sandwich, let's say pork schnitzel, and slice it in half. What results? Two half sandwiches, certainly. But notice, each of those halves is, in the full sense, also a complete sandwich. The half sandwich, in this case, also fulfills all the requirements of the sandwich proper. The same is true if the sandwich is cut into quarters, or eighths, and so on and so forth, ad infinitum (unless as per Democritus, there is a theoretical smallest sandwich). But notice also the obverse: take a tartine of any variety, a single slice of bread with toppings. This is in a very strong sense also a half sandwich, though divided the wrong way round. Now suppose you have two tartines. Do you have a complete sandwich? No, unless

they are, of course, sandwiched together in the correct fashion. But simply laid out on a plate, these two halves do not make a whole. And, equally, an infinite number of chefs infinitely preparing tartines never manages to make a complete sandwich.

2. Must a sandwich be tasty? Tastiness is not a premise within our proof. If you investigate the comestibles at your nearest petrol station, you may encounter this unpalatable treat: "The Griddler". This is constructed with waffles as bread, sausage sandwiched between. Presuming that the waffles are leavened, The Griddler is indeed a sandwich. So what's the beef? The Griddler is a *bad* sandwich. The sandwich proof endeavors to demonstrate what counts as a sandwich, not what counts as a good sandwich. This is not to assert that taste is entirely relative (it is relative, but only to a point). Suffice to say that questions of taste are beyond the scope of our purposes here. A bad sandwich is a sandwich. Some chums and I once procured from a Hot n' Now Restaurant sandwiches so offensive that my passengers chucked them from the window of my Ford Tempo on a highway north of Omaha. But even if I eat soggy newspaper between moldy pumpernickel, the experience will be undeniably unpleasant and it will undeniably be a sandwich.

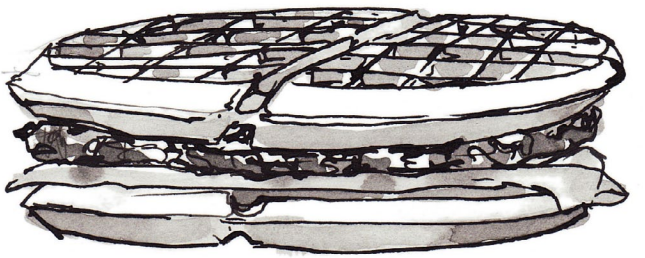
This is nothing more than an art/bad art distinction. Hubert H. Humphrey, the American vice president under Lyndon Johnson, declared that his favorite sandwich "is peanut butter, baloney, cheddar cheese, lettuce, and mayonnaise on toasted bread with catsup on the side" [7]. Just as *Jersey Shore* is art, the "Humphrey" is a sandwich, though I, for one, would not want to consume either.We may be here reminded of Nikolaus Pevsner's comment "A bicycle shed is a building; Lincoln Cathedral is a piece of architecture. Nearly everything that encloses space on a scale sufficient for a human being to move in is a building; the term architecture applies only to building designed with a view to aesthetic appeal."[8] The distinction seems irremediably elitist today. We'll brook no such distinction here; a sandwich is a sandwich is a sandwich.

But it might be worth mentioning the sandwich's early status as bicycle shed: In 1941 the California Supreme Court ruled that a hamburger sandwich does not constitute a "meal". The case concerned a concessionaire selling food at the 1937-39 World's Fair in San Francisco He "sold only frankfurter (commonly referred to as 'hot

[7]This quote is repeated frequently, in print and online, but I have not been able to cite an original source.

[8]Pevsner, Nikolaus. An Outline of European Architecture (London, Penguin: 1943), p.15.

THE GRIDDLER IS A BAD SANDWICH



dog') and hamburger sandwiches, together with coffee, milk, ale, and beer." The issue at question was whether the concessionaire owed taxes on the earnings; "meals" were exempt from sales tax. The Court ruled against the concessionaire, concluding that, "A 'hot dog' or hamburger sandwich is the type of food frequently offered for sale to and desired by persons who wish to eat something while walking about. It is not the type of food generally ordered by a person who patronizes a hotel, restaurant or other public eating establishment with the intention of securing a 'meal'….It may not be said that one has 'served' a meal who merely prepares a sandwich for consumption, wraps it in a paper napkin and hands it to a purchaser without offering any facilities for its consumption on the premises, and with the intention that it be consumed elsewhere."[9] The court's decision is incisive, but only to a point. It recognized correctly the historical significance of the sandwich's portability, but also implied that bread and meat served on a plate without a wrapper is no longer a sandwich (or at least no longer a meal). Underlying the Court's decision is a high art / low art distinction which now seems particularly outmoded, at least in America (though the French, as we've seen, sometimes maintain such a distinction, even, or especially, as applied to food). It makes no more sense to claim that a sandwich is not a meal than to claim that a bad sandwich isn't really a sandwich at all. One further aside – note the Court's reference to frankfurter or hotdog "sandwiches". I judge this description to be misled, just as I judge the Court's definition of "meal" to be empty.

6. Does packaging matter? Here are a couple oddities, both of which are sandwiches.
    a. Suppose I make turkey & American cheese sandwiches on white bread, layer them in a casserole dish, cover the lot with mushroom soup and frenchfried onions, and bake at 350? Yes, it is a sandwich, though also a sandwich "hot dish" (and it sounds pretty good, does it not?). Put more precisely, the dish as a whole is not a sandwich, but a casserole consisting of sandwiches. Indeed, the 1950 Betty Crocker's Picture Cook Book contains a very similar recipe, "cheese sandwich casserole".[10] But, notice, a similar concoction, lasagna, is not a sandwich, as lasagna noodles are not leavened.
    b. Suppose I make a standard PB&J (peanut butter and jelly),

[9]Treasure I. C. Co. v. State Board of Equal , 19 Cal.2d 181 [Sac. No. 5456. In Bank. Dec. 17, 1941.]

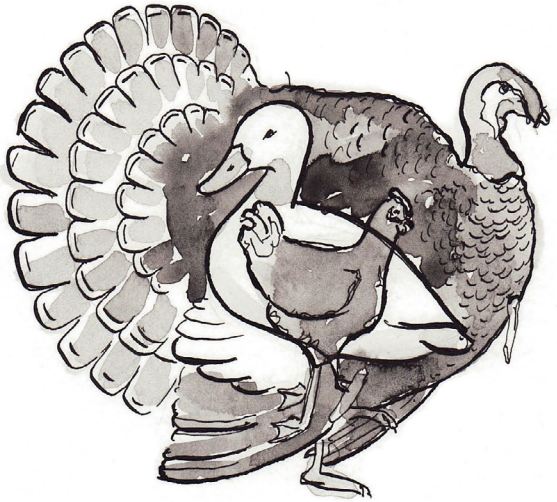
[10] Crocker, Betty. Betty Crocker's Picture Cook Book (NY: McGraw-Hill, 1950), p.402.

but I wrap the entirety in a tortilla, smother it with chipotle sauce, and eat it with a knife and a fork? It is a sandwich. Or, as above, in its interiority it is a sandwich, in its exteriority, a burrito.

c. The foregoing makes clear that any turduckenification of a sandwich renders at least one or more sandwiches. Let me explain. The turducken is a traditional Louisiana Thanksgiving dish consisting of a deboned turkey, into which has been stuffed a deboned duck, into which has been stuffed a deboned chicken. For the truly fearless, the entirety deep fried. While the turducken was exposed to a widespread audience only recently, thanks to John Madden's rhapsodizing during Thanksgiving day NFL broadcasts, the stuffing of birds inside of birds has a long history, taken to extravagant extremes in Roman feasts, for instance. In itself, bird-in-bird layering would be an excellent topic for extended monograph. Given the extensive preparatory work required by bird-stuffing, such dishes have traditionally been reserved for feast days. But, as such, turduckens are a logician's delight: a simple formula is extended to its outermost logical terminus. At the basic level, there are obvious variations on a theme: gooducken (goose-duck-chicken), pigturducken (pig-turkey-duck-chicken), or hotchken (chicken-hot dogs). But just as with Bach's Goldberg Variations, the theme can be carried to increasing levels of complexity. Famously, Grimod de la Reyniere described, in his 1807 *Almanach de la Gourmands* the "roast without equal" in which a great bustard is stuffed with a turkey, goose, pheasant, chicken, duck, guinea fowl, teal, woodcock, partridge, plover, lapwing, quail, thrush, lark, ortolan bunting, and a garden warbler.[11] Even this intricacy seems mild compared to the shocking, but perhaps apocryphal, Bedoin wedding feasts, in which whole camels are stuffed with sheep, bustards, carp, dates, eggs, and so forth, and cooked for two days in a pit. What similar self-referential stacking can be made of the genre at hand, sandwiches? Let us hope that some inspired reader takes up the gauntlet.

Consider how the principle of turduckenification proceeds here. Any sandwich proper may be sandwiched inside another sandwich. Here is a simple example: a turkey

[11] De La Reyniere, Alexandre-Balthazar-Lau, Almanach Des Gourmands: Servant De Guide Dans Les Moyens Des Faire Excellente Chee (Nabu Press, 2010).



TURDUCKENS ARE A LOGICIAN'S DELIGHT: A SIMPLE FORMULA IS EXTENDED TO ITS OUTERMOST LOGICAL TERMINUS

sandwich (turkey, mayo, pickles, white bread), but with an extra slice of bread on both top and bottom. The result is a turkey sandwich sandwich. And why stop there? Add another slice of bread on both top and bottom and the result is a turkey sandwich sandwich sandwich. Repeat ad infinitum. Now, it is unlikely that anyone would eat a sandwich quite like this, but it *would* be a sandwich. It should be noted that this strategy is not entirely without precedent. A club sandwich features bread as a filling, as does a Big Mac.

The Dagwood Bumstead is a sandwich demonstrating a related principle (and a particular Americanization of the sandwich), in which everything imaginable is added, rendering a concoction of such height as to make eating with hands impossible. The Dagwood is itself indicative of a separate category of interest: size, girth, hugeness. This further underscores the bankruptcy of the historical distinction between "meal" and "sandwich" (as above). The sandwich is now rarely presumed a light snack. Every couple years there is another attempt to create the world's largest sandwich (a distinction whose virtue is mysterious at best). As far as this author is concerned the world's largest sandwich is that made by the residents of Itching Down.[12]

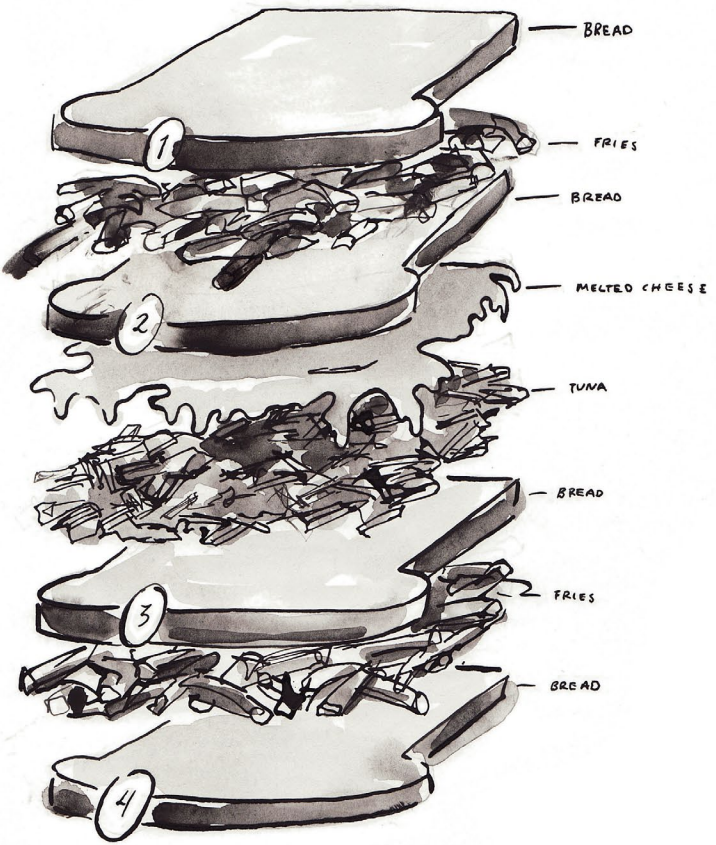
But it is the literal containment of one sandwich inside another that the turducken inspires. Take for instance, the following: a grilled cheese inside of which is contained a Rueben (and thus having four slices of bread). We could call the result a grilled chreuben. Consider a chip butty (french fry sandwich) inside of which is a tuna melt. And what would we call this portmanteau? A chuna belt? I have no idea, but it would be undeniably desirable. And as with the grilled chreuben, it would in fact be two sandwiches (if one is even more precise, it is six sandwiches, depending upon how the slices of bread are paired with one another).

And finally, I did hear of someone who constructed (and ate) a sandwich with two complete Monte Cristo sandwiches as the buns, and cheeseburger filling (burger, cheese, onions, tomato, lettuce) in between.[13] For those not familiar with the Monte Cristo, I'll explain without mincing words: this is

[12]See Lord, John Vernon & Janet Burroway. *The Giant Jam Sandwich* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1972).

[13]I no longer have the reference detailing the origin of this sandwich within a sandwich. But take my word for it.

# THE CHUNA BELT




1-2 / 1-3 / 1-4 / 2-3 / 2-4 / 3-4

6 SANDWICHES!

an awful, awful sandwich. Ham, turkey, and cheese on white or wheat bread, the entirety deep-fried, generously sprinkled with powdered sugar and served with a side of raspberry jam. An attempt to turn a savory sandwich into a doughnut, or perhaps a doughnut into a savory sandwich. It does count as a sandwich, certainly, but I won't try one again any time soon. Who knows what such a turduckenified sandwich could be called, but it speaks of mythologizing self-referentiality: in America, we make sandwiches out of sandwiches.

Despite what I've said, an unpalatable logical strangeness arises from the foregoing: for lunch one could simply eat a bread sandwich, which would be a sandwich consisting of three slices of bread and nothing else. By extension, a sliced loaf of bread still in the bag is already a sandwich, with multiple slices of bread as the only filling. The same is true for a stack of pancakes. I grant that calling a buttermilk short stack a sandwich is counterintuitive, but it is nevertheless consistent with the proof. Are we caught in a reductio ad absurdum?
An inevitable consideration here is the significance of common usage. No one calls a stack of pancakes a sandwich, so how can it really be a one? Perhaps when people say sandwich they really mean, "all that Dr. Jensen described in his proof, but with exclusion of stacks of pancakes". Maybe; in fact, probably. We could even alter the premises of our proof to reflect this assertion. For instance, the following premise could be added:

$$\sim[F = (B' \vee B'')]$$

Such a line would be read in the following way "it is not the case that the filling is equivalent to either the first or second slice of bread," which would indicate that the filling cannot be identical to the bread, though this is not precisely the pancake problem. With pancakes, the difficulty is that the filling is a tertiary token of a common type, to which the bread belongs. And even beyond that difficulty, such a premise would also disallow clubs and Big Macs, a consequence we'll probably want to reject. A more incisive premise would require that while the sandwiched filling *may* contain bread, it must also contain *more than* bread. This could be rendered in the following way:

$$\sim\{F = [(B' \vee B'') \cdot \sim X]\}$$

Here, X is taken to indicate anything *except* bread. This could be read as expressing that any extra bread appearing between the two sandwiching slices simply does not count as filling or otherwise. Other possible renderings of this premise could achieve the same result, perhaps more elegantly. But even this is of limited use: a stack of pancakes with butter or syrup between two cakes is, again, a sandwich.

I resist these attempts to circumnavigate the pancake problem, as it gives away too much. Indeed, I want to say that a stack of pancakes, or a loaf of bread *really is* a sandwich, despite our never calling it that. It indeed features sandwiching. And how are we to respond to the joker who puts together three slices and says "Hey, look at my bread sandwich!"? Is he wrong? Not at all. While it is becoming apparent that intentionality has a role to play here, there is a limit to the authority of common usage. The meaning of a word is not wholly reducible to its usage by the majority (or its usage by the totality, either), nor is it reducible to what we *think* it means. But, as we'll see, this is not the final word on the matter either.

4. Must a sandwich's contents be existential? My son once described his first grade school cafeteria lunch as consisting of a "nothing sandwich". It turns out that the cafeteria was serving an empty hamburger bun with Sloppy Joe meat on the side; the expectation was that the children would themselves put the sandwich together. My son missed the instructions, hence the "nothing sandwich". The oddness of his comment of course, was that he accepted what he had been served as yet a sandwich, albeit quite bland (but which he liked). So was it in fact a sandwich? Well, yes and no. The nothing sandwich is only a sandwich if nothing is taken to be something, which is to say, it is a sandwich if the absence of fixins itself constitutes a conspicuous presence. Consider Elwood Blues' conversation with himself: "You ever heard of a wish sandwich? A wish sandwich is the kind of a sandwich where you have two slices of bread, and you wish you had some meat (bow bow bow)".[14] Here the wish is sandwiched, so it both is and is not empty. But, obviously, we can only go so far before we've confused a metaphor for a set of objective properties.

   One is reminded here of the distinction between Aristotelian and Boolean logic. Aristotelians are exposed to what is referred to as the existential fallacy when they assume that a particular class has

[14]I've quoted Dan Akroyd's version, as performed with the Blues Brothers, and found on *The Blues Brothers' Definitive Collection*, released by Atlantic in 1992. The song has been recorded by many artists, and was composed by Charles Johnson and Adam Levy for the Chips in 1956.

members, when it turns out not to. In this case, making a judgment about whether a particular candidate is or is not a sandwich runs afoul of the existential fallacy if the item in question does not actually exist. Thus, in reference to the earlier mentioned turkey sandwich sandwich sandwich, it may be that no person has ever made such a sandwich, in which case it is non-existent. Is it still a sandwich? Booleans do not have to worry about this, since no attention is paid to existentiality whatsoever; the rules are themselves all encompassing, and are not assumed to have any bearing (or of lack bearing) on the world as it actually is. Aristotelians, however, need to consider whether the sandwich in question exists somewhere in the world. More problems ensue when considering sandwiches eaten by fictional characters. Paddington Bear, for instance, was particularly fond of marmalade sandwiches. So, are Paddington's sandwiches sandwiches, since they do not properly exist? Surely, *someone's* actual marmalade sandwiches exist, but do Paddington's? We *seem* to be able to talk meaningfully about whether the things that Paddington eats are sandwiches, and yet, any distinctions we make lack real reference. Don't they…?

5. A slice of pizza is not a sandwich. But two slices of pizza, one inverted on top of the other, is a sandwich. It's also just smushed-up pizza.
6. A jelly doughnut is not a sandwich. But a jelly doughnut sliced in two, and both slices eaten together, is a sandwich. Further, even if a jelly doughnut and a jelly doughnut sandwich are indistinguishable to the person eating, only one is a sandwich.
7. A slice of layer cake, in which frosting appears between layers of cake, is a sandwich. This seems at first disappointing, indicating perhaps an inadequacy in our proof. However, while this is no longer common, dictionaries once referred to layer cake as an example of a sandwich.
8. A school friend of mine used to expound about the attractiveness of a pair of sisters, who were our classmates. Referring to their last name, he said he wanted to be a Dane sandwich. No, emphatically no, this is not a real sandwich. Nevertheless, in referring to a Dane sandwich, everyone knew very clearly what he was talking about.[15] Certainly, the word is employed in just this sense all the time: to mark similarity of structure between a non-food object or process and a sandwich (and in this case, to mark something tasty and desirable). But this shows that we do in fact know what a sandwich is, and that we know how to use a good metaphor.

[15]Yes, I've changed the sisters' name. And also notice my friend's error: we usually ascribe a name per the filling not the bread.

THE NOTHING SANDWICH IS ONLY A SANDWICH IF NOTHING IS TAKEN TO BE SOMETHING

> The dictionary on my shelf (Merriam Webster's Collegiate)[16] provides one definition of sandwich, which reads, in part, as follows: "something resembling a sandwich". Under this definition, the Dane sandwich would indeed be a sandwich, because it resembles one. But notice the absurd circularity of such a definition: a thing is defined as being like itself. Not only does this violate the schoolboy rule of not using the word in the definition, but it is inherently tautological, and thus empty. Clearly, we cannot equate the entity described by a metaphor with the language of the metaphor itself, without reducing the trope to nonsense.

Objection 7:

*The Double Down*

Our final objection to the sandwich proof deserves special attention. We turn now to a grotesque known as the Double Down. This "sandwich" made by fast-food purveyor KFC, consists in bacon, two kinds of cheese, and the Colonel's mystery sauce, sandwiched by two deep-fried chicken breasts. The concoction is virtually all meat, without bread at all. We might note that the chicken is breaded, but, as per the terms of our proof this is no qualification – the breading is unleavened. (And note another instance of zero-derivation: something is *breaded* to make it more like bread. And if bread is breaded, is it made more like itself?). Is the Double Down a sandwich by the objective terms of our proof? No; the lack of bread is sufficient for exclusion. But, as by the terms of its own internal logic, this particular non-sandwich is significant.

Notice that the absurdity of the Double Down has only peripherally to do with calories and cholesterol. Certainly we can condemn the Double Down as offensively unhealthy (it is), but not with a straight face. That the Double Down is unhealthy is just more grist for the mill. Our own gluttony has been evident for a while now, and in that respect at least, the Double Down is a footnote. Remember the Elvis Sandwich, peanut butter, bacon and banana, fried in butter? This sandwich was once regarded as the extreme reference point for unhealthiness at lunch, and is cited as a contributor to Elvis' post-Vegas descent. We would hardly think so now. Instead, we tend to think that it sounds pretty yummy, and bananas are good for you, right?

We save the Double Down for the final objection because of its self-referentiality. The Double Down (and surely this is intentional on the part of KFC) is a parody. Parody proceeds by replacing something seemingly

[16] *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition* (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Incorporated, 1993), p.1035.

mundane, ordinarily given no special attention, with something reminiscent, but exaggerated (and in this case, something, well, gross). Consider Sigmund Freud's own description, "Parody and travesty achieve the degradation of something exalted in another way: by destroying the unity that exists between people's characters as we know them and their speeches and actions, and by replacing either the exalted figures or their utterances by inferior ones".[17] But, notice, if the parody (or travesty) works, and the Double Down seems to us hilarious (it does), this implies, as Freud was aware, that the joke is really more about us as consumers than it is about sandwiches as such. In particular, while the Double Down seems on one level almost offensively gross, plenty of us simultaneously find the Double Down appealing. So, the joke is on us, and we're not too far removed from Carmen Miranda's words from the beginning of the text.

Finally, notice how the joke succeeds on its own simplicity; the Double Down does nothing other than turn the logical terms of the sandwich inside out – the bread becomes meat. But merely concocting a bad sandwich, skunk on Wonder Bread, for instance, is not remotely as funny, because the standard semantic terms, bread and meat, are left untouched. The Double Down mixes up the premises; it is a logician's joke, but it isn't a sandwich.

[17] Freud, Sigmund. *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* Trans. James Strachey. (W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1960)

NOTICE THAT THE ABSURDITY OF THE DOUBLE DOWN HAS ONLY PERIPHERALLY TO DO WITH CALORIES AND CHOLESTEROL

# 3: Between Proof and Meaning

Unfortunately, defining the sandwich is not so simple as I have thus far made out. Despite handling the objections successfully, as I think the sandwich proof does, there remains a difficulty. The sandwich proof suffers from a limitation, which may have become increasingly apparent. The proof delineates objective properties: the necessary and the sufficient physical requirements of the sandwich. Our strictly objective aesthetic theory has generated a few unwanted results (stacks of pancakes are in, banh mi are out), though I think these oddities are acceptable. Rather, the difficulty concerns *meaning*. Any definition of the sandwich which proceeds simply by delineating its physical features leaves out of consideration a key ingredient: the human. How do we regard the sandwich? How do we relate to it? How do we *eat* it? What is it to *us*? *How* does a sandwich mean?

What makes a sandwich a sandwich? Bread and filling, certainly. But perhaps something more? Is not a sandwich a sandwich, above all, only by our *thinking* that it is? Is an inert assemblage of ingredients a sandwich, or is it necessary that someone identify it as such? We know, for instance that bread with meat only became a sandwich at a certain point in history, and not before. So, our question might be put this way: if a sandwich falls in the forest, and no one is around, is it a "sandwich", or just bread and meat?

But, again, this new tack cannot be taken too far either. What a person intends, thinks or says in considering sandwiches is important, but not in itself definitive. Humans do not use words in uniformly prescriptive ways, despite the best wishes of logicians. So, even if I *mean* "sandwich" when I say "sandwich", there is no guarantee that what I mean conforms to any common usage. The "Dane sandwich" is itself illustrative of this semantic/syntactic distinction: when such a reference is made, we all know what's being talked about, because we share

knowledge of the metaphorical referent, but our understanding does not make the Dane sandwich a true sandwich. Likewise, a knuckle sandwich is a punch in the face and not a tasty treat (though, to be fair, an "actual" knuckle sandwich, as in the German tradition, is a tasty treat: lettuce, tomato, mayonnaise, and pork knuckles on a bun).

It is because we recognize the common resemblance of a knuckle sandwich to food (fist in mouth) that we know what a knuckle sandwich is. Or consider the following scene from the movie *Spinal Tap*, in which Marty reads from the newspaper: "The review for Shark Sandwich was merely a two word review which simply read shit sandwich".[18] And thus when we say that something is a shit sandwich, we mean to imply that its quite bad, unpalatable, even extending beyond food to anything really, really awful.

So, is not a knuckle or shit sandwich in some sense a sandwich also? Yes, but no. We do not want to simply accept popular usage as definitive, for the following reason. A person *could* understand and use the term incorrectly. We need to leave open the possibility that a person could be wrong about what a sandwich is. Suppose we have the following hypothetical conversation:

> Ben: "So he crawled under a sandwich."
> Gus: "He what?"
> Ben: "He crawled under a sandwich. A stationary sandwich."
> Gus: "No?"
> Ben: "The sandwich started and ran over him"
> Gus: "Go on!"[19]

We can figure out what's happing in the above, more or less, because Ben uses the word consistently, Gus seems to understand him, and because we are given sufficient context. But, surely we wouldn't say that the word is used correctly, would we? A lorry is not a sandwich, even if Ben thinks it so. And likewise, I stand on my logic here and insist that a burrito is not a sandwich, a wrap is not a sandwich, neither smørrebrød nor a hot brown nor a hotdog, even if some person calls a hotdog a sandwich, and *even if that person is understood*.

An aside: I have a particular disdain for the "wrap" as identifiable food item, to the extent that I won't eat one. However, give me the same set of ingredients identified as a "pita", "burrito", or "cold tortilla enveloping cream cheese and chipped beef", and I have no immediate objection. My reluctance here stems from the obviousness with which the "wrap" is simply a re-branding of already existing food, the capitalistic drive to innovate. On having even a semi-decent wrap, do not we always conclude that it is nothing more than "a burrito with

[18] *This is Spinal Tap*, directed by Rob Reiner, released in 1984.

[19] Apologies to Pinter, Harold. *The Dumb Waiter* (London: Methuen, 1960).

A LORRY IS NOT A SANDWICH,
EVEN IF BEN THINKS SO

lettuce"? Any appearance of a wrap on a menu is evidence of a paucity of ideas.

But back to the task at hand: a word may not mean *anything* we like (unless, of course, we think that it does). In chess games the allowable moves are governed by specified rules: the knight moves in such-and-such a way, the bishop like so. We do not simply make up new rules (or, rather, when we do make up new rules, as with Reagan chess or other variations, we recognize that we are now play a *new* game, governed by its own rules). Language is likewise governed by rules, but unlike chess, rules are bent continually. And in doing so, new rules are created. Instead of chess, one might think here of Calvinball, the game imagined by Bill Watterson in his *Calvin and Hobbes* books. In Calvin's game, new rules can be declared spontaneously and inconsistently in the middle of the game. Further, any rule used during the game cannot be used in future games, for fear of producing the same result. So, the game intentionally works to subvert any consistency or shared context. While not naturally as volatile as the rules of Calvinball, language does continually change. So, suppose the meaning of the word shifts sufficiently over the course of time, such that *everyone* begins to use the word sandwich as Ben and Gus do above? It then comes to mean precisely what Ben and Gus seem to think that it means. The word would then communicate as intended. However, if Ben alone thinks a lorry counts as a sandwich, then he's plainly incorrect; no one will know what he's talking about.

Thus, if I call a hotdog a sandwich, I'm wrong. If I call it a sandwich, and a few other people do also, then I'm perhaps expressing a regional or colloquial variation. In this case, I would at least be partially correct. But if it comes to be the case that virtually everyone calls a hotdog a sandwich, then it really is a sandwich, implying that the definition of sandwich had itself shifted. I am not making the case, however, that a word is entirely reducible to its common usage. It is not (at the very least, we need to add the importance of *time*). Nevertheless, any understanding of "sandwich" must at least overlap with how the word is commonly used. The crucial addition to the argument thus far is this: the objective terms of our proof's premises are sound, but they are sound only because they substantially overlap with what people mean when they say sandwich. But, to understand what we really do *mean* when we refer to sandwiches, attention needs be given to the sandwich's history.

# 4: Origins

Tradition dictates that any discourse on the sandwich, however brief, make mention of its origins. This story has oft been told, and we are already well acquainted with the association of this comestible with that esteemed dyad, British royalty and gambling. But a warning is worth mention: in such inquiries we find ourselves drawn to considerations of origins, perhaps even against our better judgment. Origins, despite the preponderance of authority we invest in them, are rarely entirely knowable, and even when they are indeed knowable, aren't entirely determinate of present states of affairs. In other words, while we can speculate about the first sandwich, it may or may not have bearing on lunch as eaten today, (as we shall see) either in composition or importance.

Respect for a venerable line of inquiry, at the very least, requires that I review what historical disquisitions have as yet produced. Generally, third-hand accounts of the origins of the sandwich, of the kind that are found innumerably in the most readily-available cookbooks, are pallid affairs. There's mention of gambling and a quick aside to the need for efficiency, but little else. As we'll see, the accepted history of the sandwich ought to be opened to renewed investigation, both to establish its veracity, and to discover what bearing the sandwich's myth of origins has on the meaning of sandwiches today.

As has been alluded, the sandwich is the namesake of John Montagu, the 4th Earl of Sandwich, who is supposed to have preferred this method of ingestion while otherwise distracted by the gaming table at the London Beef Steak Club. Popular account has it that Mr. Montagu's attention became so consumed by card playing that he declined to get up from his seat for hours at a time (suggestions of periods of twenty-four hours or greater are cited). He is said to have sent his valet to the kitchen for meat held between two slices of bread, which would keep his hands free from the overly cumbersome knife and fork. As this habit became

known, other patrons of the club began to order "the same as Sandwich".

It may be worth noting that if we give this story credence, we have also a recipe for the paradigmatic first sandwich: Mr. Montagu ate salt beef between toasted bread (baguette? boule?). So what ingredients did the term sandwich (or "same as Sandwich") originally connote? Would a grilled cheese, for instance, have been called a sandwich? Or even a same as Sandwich? How about a Sloppy Joe? Probably not. Obviously, as we have seen, the trajectory of the term is toward broader and broader applicability, such that we now have not just bread and meat, but nearly infinite variations on a theme. By what name should we now refer to Montagu's original recipe? Simply calling it a sandwich would now be inadequate. I propose two possible names for salt beef on toasted bread: (1) the "Sandwich sandwich", (2) the "same as Sandwich". Take your pick.

This version of events described above is widely known, and is frequently recounted with the expectation that we find the story amusing. The humor resides in two facets of the account: first, this is a twist on the old adage, necessity breeds invention, gambling here playing the maternal role. Any person so committed to gambling that he must invent a new cuisine in order to accommodate the habit is worthy of at least some measure of admiration. Secondly, however, the story is memorable because we have a very clear moment of invention – it appears before our eyes distinctly. This is rare for cuisine, especially dishes with a long tradition and wide acceptance. We know how the light bulb was conjured, why and by whom, and under what circumstances. With pizza or polenta, however, origins are too steeped in mythology to be distinctly known, and existing accounts are generally apocryphal. Despite this apparently clear beginning to the sandwich, however, there are many remaining questions.

The first appearance in print of the term sandwich is apparently attributed to none other than Edward Gibbon, he of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Gibbon recorded in a journal entry of November 24, 1762 a description of gentlemen dining at The Cocoa Tree, in London: "That respectable body every evening affords a sight truly English. Twenty or thirty of the first men of the kingdom…supping at little tables…upon a bit of cold meat, or a Sandwich."[20] We know then, that the term sandwich was already in use in the early 1760s (and note Gibbon's capitalization: in Gibbon's day it was a Sandwich, today it is a sandwich).

It may be worth mention that Gibbon's journal entry predates by two years the occurrence of his first clear conception that he would write the book that he subsequently became known for. This is perhaps notable in that Gibbon already here is associating a behavior with national identity: the sandwich seems notable less for the ingredients eaten than for its being a particularly *English* way to eat. In

[20]Gibbon, Edward. *Gibbon's Journal to January 28, 1763*, ed. D.M. Low (London: Chatto and Windus, 1929).

retrospect, this may be surprising, as we now think of the sandwich (and I think correctly so) as distinctly American. But, again, some individual sandwiches are exceptions. For instance, the vegemite sandwich is iconicly Australian, and where in America can one find a Roti John?

When did the good Earl begin eating his bread and meat in this fashion? And was it really gambling that spawned this gastronomical legacy? This is not clear. The sole source for Mr. Montagu's involvement is Pierre-Jean Grosley's *Londres*, published in 1770 (published in translation as *A Tour to London* in 1772), in which the following passage occurs:

> "A minister of state passed four and twenty hours at a public gaming-table, so absorbt in play that, during the whole time, he had no subsistence but a bit of beef, between two slices of toasted bread, which he eat without ever quitting the game. This new dish grew highly in vogue, during my residence in London: it was called by the name of the minister who invented it."[21]

A close consideration of Grosley's account, however, leaves room for doubt. Grosley was known as a writer of gossip, and perhaps may be held to question, at least in that regard. N.A.M. Roger has raised this point in his biography of the 4th Earl of Sandwich.[22] On top of this, Roger makes the following inference: as the Earl was a cabinet minister in 1765 (the date in which Grosley was touring London), and was known to have spent many long hours at work, it is unlikely that he would have devoted such endurance to gambling. Twenty four hour gambling binges would be an astonishing feat for a minister who was not only busy, but also continued to be successful. More likely, according to Roger, is that he sustained himself with bread and salt beef while putting in long hours at the office. According to this suggestion, the sandwich would thus still have been invented out of necessity, but necessity at his place of employment rather than the gaming table.

We might add to Roger's objection the following: the time period considered in Grosley's account is 1765. Since we know by way of Mr. Gibbon that the term sandwich (or Sandwich) was already in use in 1762, it seems probable (perhaps necessary) that Monsieur Grosley acquired the account of the Earl's involvement second hand. Contrariwise, however, the disagreement in dates raises questions about Roger's objection also - if Mr. Montagu was too busy for marathon gambling sessions in 1765, this does not go very far toward

[21]Grosley, Pierre-Jean. *A Tour to London; Or New Observations on England and its Inhabitants* trans. Thomas Nugent. (Lockyer Davis, 1772).

[22]See Roger, N.A.M. *The Insatiable Earl: A Life of John Montagu, 4th Earl of Sandwich* W.W. Norton & Company, 1994.

CHARLES - GENEVIÈVE - LOUIS - AUGUSTE. ANDRÉ - TIMOTHÉE - D'EON DE BEAUMONT

the denying of the possibility that he developed the sandwich as an aide in gambling at an earlier date. In fact, we can go so far as to say that since we know that Montagu rejoined the Admiralty in 1763 in the government of John Stuart, and since we know that before this time he was not heavily involved in politics, Roger's suggestion that he was working too hard in 1765 to have been absorpt at gambling has no bearing on whether he spent hours at the gaming table before being appointed a government position. He had been appointed First Lord of the Admiralty in 1748, a position which he retained until 1751. At this time he was sacked as part of some political machinations directed by the Duke of Newcastle, and spent the next several years away from political involvement, primarily at his country estate. Could this be the occasion upon which Montagu devoted himself (and his valet) to the development of gambling snacks? Possibly, but not definitively, so we still have an open set of questions. But he *could* indeed have concocted the first sandwich as a gambler's aide, and still not have had his work interrupted, even if Grosley's assertion is less than definitive.

Montagu was known to have gambled, this much is certain. But Montagu's personal gambling habits are almost unremarkable given the environment in which they occurred. British high society at the time in question was beset by almost continual gambling. This in itself is interesting: a privileged class has too much time on its hands, and so to combat the boredom even the most common and mundane events of the day were fodder for games of chance. Montagu was not known to have gambled rampantly (for instance there are not other accounts of him gambling for twenty-four hour binges, or reports of great losses or gains), but it is well documented that he did engage in the practice at least occasionally, even if this was for Mr. Montagu only a means of conforming to the general expectations of a man in his station. Among other matters, it is confirmed that Montagu placed bets on the outcomes of elections, on the winnings of hunting parties, the distances between various points and even on the gender of the Chevalier d'Eon, the French diplomat and spy. (An aside: the gender of Charles-Geneviève-Louis-Auguste-André-Timothée d'Éon de Beaumont, more commonly known as Chevalier d'Eon was hotly debated. (S)He lived the first half of his life as a man, but the second half as a woman. A betting pool was started on the London Stock Exchange regarding the Chevalier's gender, though it was never resolved and was dropped after a year.) Betting on such events was entirely commonplace, and gentlemen would have been expected to take part in at least informal games of chance.

We might finally add that at the time period in question, the Earl was rather strapped for cash, enough so that money was a continual concern for him, and it is at least possible that his need for funds motivated his gambling. As implied, however, such a claim is far from definitive, particularly as gambling at this particular time and place was de rigueur and there is no record of his engaging in gambling explicitly for the purpose of paying off debts.

So where does all this speculation leave the sandwich? Here are the possibilities:

1. The story as popularly regarded is true. Thus, the sandwich really was invented by John Montagu, the Fourth Earl of Sandwich, to shore up his hunger pangs while engaged in extended bouts of gambling.
2. Montagu invented the sandwich, but not while gambling. Rather, he developed the snack to sustain himself at his desk while working late. The connection with gambling is spurious gossip (this seems to be the historian Roger's account, and we might wonder if it is motivated at least in part by a desire to portray Montagu in a noble light, undarkened by vices such as gambling).
3. The sandwich was popularized by association with Montagu under circumstances unknown, and indirectly, or at least subsequently, came to be a favored dish in London's gambling clubs. The two phenomena were conflated to give us the apocryphal story we all know today.

One can certainly imagine scenarios other than these three, but I forward the foregoing as the most plausible. I for one am inclined to think that the final possibility is the most likely, as it seems most consistent with what we know about Montagu's behaviors during the time in question. However, if this is the case, it leaves us with (at the very least) two remaining questions:

1. If Montagu did not invent the sandwich, who did?
2. Why did the sandwich come to be associated with this particular founding myth?

Let's take the first question first. Was the sandwich actually invented by Montagu, or rather eaten by him and only later popularized? Was it Sandwich's idea? His valet's? The chefs at the London Beef Steak Club? Or was it already in existence, and Montagu's association was incidental mythologizing? Few scholars claim that the sandwich was literally invented by Montagu (at least in the sense of taking the position that people just didn't eat meat between two slices of bread before his time). We know that bread and meat was indeed eaten before Sandwich's time, though it certainly wasn't called a sandwich (or a Sandwich), and it is not clear that such a dish had any specific name at all. Nor was it inevitable that the sandwich come to be known by this particular name, even with the association between food and person firmly in place. It might have been the "Montagu" the "John", or perhaps the "Earl". Witness this exchange from *Blackadder*, in which the characters are attempting to reconstruct Dr. Johnson's dictionary:

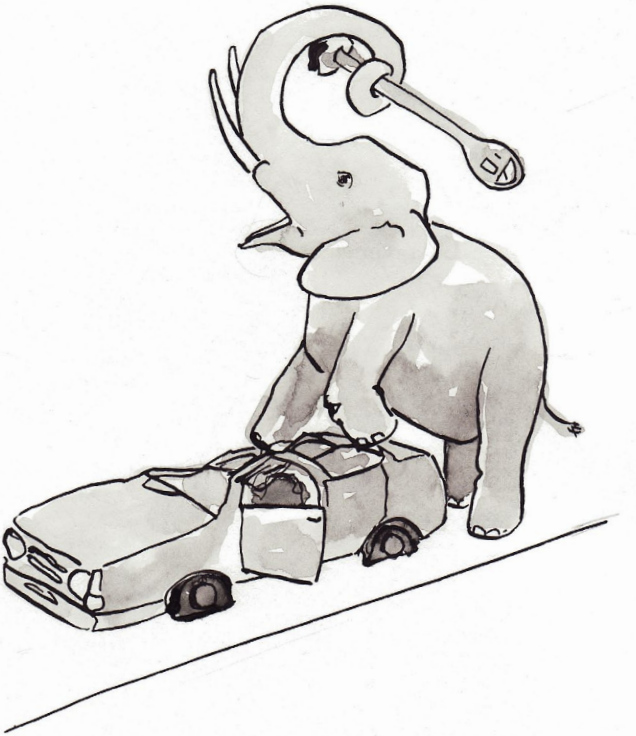
Blackadder: "Get me some meat between two slices of bread".
Baldrick: "You mean the kind that Gerald, Lord Sandwich likes to have?".
Blackadder: "Yes, yes, get me a couple of Geralds".[23]

We might add here some thoughts about naming as such, as our inquiry seems almost as drawn to why the sandwich is called in this particular way as it is to the dish's composition. Before referring to a food the word sandwich was (and is) a place name. But this has meaning too. The Old English "wich" referred to a salt pit; thus the place name Sandwich designated a sandy salt pit. Sandwich, in Kent, contained the Saxon village of Stonar (which itself disappeared in the 14th century) and in AD 43 was the site of the Roman invasion of England. Among other notable claims, Sandwich witnessed the arrival of the first captive elephant in England in 1255. Shortly after its arrival, the elephant killed a bull, which, agitated at the appearance of the pachyderm, attacked it. The bull was swiftly dispatched. One can surmise that Sandwich is, or was, a place characterized by or containing a sandy salt pit.

But place names do not always ring true. Neither Sandwich, Massachusetts nor the Sandwich Islands, for instance, were named with either sand or salt (or food) in mind, but rather were named to honor he for whom the food is a namesake, the good Earl. We now refer to the Sandwich Islands as Hawaii, where in 1994 a circus elephant killed its trainer and rampaged through the streets of Kakaako, before being shot by local police. The name migrates further: a fish native to Hawaii has the Latin designation Eleotris Sandwicensis, though is also known as the Sandwich Island Sleeper. This raises interesting possibilities. Would it be a stretch to call a sandwich made with this fish a "sandwich sandwich"? But this would be perhaps too easily confused with the "Sandwich sandwich". Perhaps we can just say "sandwich sleeper sandwich", which has a palindromic appeal. As a place name the term South Sandwich Islands is still in use, designating a barren collection of small islands in the south Atlantic. It is very unlikely that elephants have ever been present on the South Sandwich Islands, though the islands are relatively near Elephant Island, named not for pachyderms, but seals.

If the study of names has enduring charm, it is at least in part because names are mysterious: while a name may persist indefinitely, its original designee is forgotten, even though the need to indicate the designee is the presumed reason for the name's "invention". Thus when one refers to a "peanut butter and jelly sandwich" one is not referring to a "peanut butter and jelly sandy salt-pit", any more than one is referring to a "peanut butter and jelly John Montagu", or even "a dish with bread, peanut butter and jelly prepared in the style that John

[23]Curtis, Richard & Ben Elton (writers). Directed by Mandie Fletcher. "Ink and Incapability", *Blackadder the Third* (Third Series, 1987), aired September 24, 1987.



WE NOW REFER TO THE SANDWICH ISLANDS AS HAWAII, WHERE IN 1994 A CIRCUS ELEPHANT KILLED ITS TRAINER AND RAMPAGED THROUGH THE STREETS OF KAHAKU

Montagu's valet might have prepared it". Nevertheless, the name persists.
An important question remains as to whether the bread and meat eaten before Montagu's time was "sandwiched" or was served open-faced. Trenchers, which might be considered a form of open-faced sandwich, were in common usage throughout the middle ages. A trencher consisted of a piece of stale bread cut to shape, and used the way one would use a plate. We might think of the trencher as presaging the practice popularized in the 1980s of serving a taco salad in an edible corn shell "bowl" or soup in a hollowed loaf of bread. A distinction, however, is that the remnants of trenchers, once the meal was finished, were regularly offered as alms to the poor. It would be very unusual today, however, (and presumably in poor form?) to offer the remains of one's taco shell bowl to the homeless.

Again, even according to the standard account of the sandwich's origins, the novel factor is the *sandwiching*, and not the ingredients, and I have made much of this in the sandwich proof detailed earlier. However, if "sandwiching" is the crucial innovation, we might look for the sandwich's origins elsewhere. An alternative account of the sandwich's origins dates the invention to the first century B.C.E. We're told that Hillel the Elder sandwiched Paschal lamb and maror between matzoh, which has been eaten on Passover ever since. Paschal lamb refers to the lamb sacrificed at the first Passover. When the Hillel "sandwich" is eaten at Passover today, it is done so without lamb. Maror refers to "bitter herbs", and is most commonly recreated by pairing horseradish with romaine lettuce.

My contention is that the Hillel sandwich is not a true sandwich, for two reasons. First, the Hillel is eaten on unleavened bread. We saw earlier that this alone is sufficient to disqualify it as a sandwich. Second, and perhaps more problematically, the Hillel did not carry any of the cultural connotations which I will assert were a necessary accompaniment to the appearance of the sandwich as currently understood. (Unleavened) bread and filling, yes, but a sandwich, no. To make this point more clear, understand the role of the Hillel sandwich. The eater of the Hillel sandwich is given to brood over the bitterness of the maror, symbolic of one's past misdeeds. The matzoh, however, is healing, bringing to the eater the peace that comes through humility. Thus the Hillel sandwich is a food with overt symbolic purpose (many foods carry symbolic purpose, both explicitly and implicitly). This purpose is to deliver the eater from wickedness to virtue. If, as I will explain, the sandwich as sandwich first appears as an independent cultural object only in its association with gambling (and more to the point, capitalism), then it is necessary that the sandwich as such appear only in the particular time and place traditionally accepted as its birthplace. In other words, the Hillel sandwich does not count as a true sandwich, because it does not have the same *meaning*, or convey the appropriate connotations. And because it occurred historically earlier than the sandwich, it is neither a mimic nor a parody. While the dish plays an important role during Passover, it is not the role played

by Montagu's sandwich (in fact one could almost say that the role played is the opposite).

Okay, I realize that I've stepped in the mustard here. I've grabbed onto the premise that what counts as a sandwich is not merely determined by objective properties of the food itself, but also by contextual qualities – what the food *means*. Yes, yes, I know that problems ensue, as we shall see. I hope to have an answer to these problems, though they will be dealt with but briefly here. Consider the following: suppose that someone had invented a successful flying machine before the Wright brothers, (for instance, imagine that Leonardo DaVinci's earlier designs were realized). Would we not universally agree that such a machine was, in fact, an airplane? Well, probably. Undeniably. So what is the difference here? An airplane may be objectively defined: a machine that flies. A sandwich is also defined objectively, as we have seen, but that objective definition overlaps upon, and itself gives rise to, a *cultural phenomenon*. Bear with me.

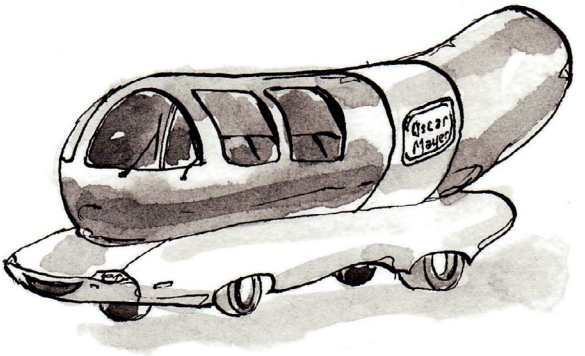
John Montagu is supposed to have created his first sandwich sometime in the 1760s. Long before this, however, at least as early as the late 16th century, "bread and meat" or "bread and cheese" was in common rotation as London street food.[24] A "bread and meat man" is thought to have been a known expression referring to a vendor of such foods. Numerous English plays pre-dating Montagu reference the bread and meat man in various ways. It is worth mention also that a "bread-and-meat-man" has at various times been taken as English slang to refer to an officer of an army commissariat. This connotation may have no relation to sandwiches at all, though it is not clear that this separate connotation should cast doubt on the reliability of the other connotation, that of a street vendor purveying bread and meat. Incidentally, a "sandwich man" is a person wearing a sandwich board, either as advertising or to forecast the end of the world ("The end is nigh!"). In this case there is no connection with food at all; the person, however, is sandwiched.

Certainly, the pairing of bread with meat was commonplace throughout the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, and with various popularity throughout Europe, such that this particular combination of ingredients could not be considered especially novel. It has even been suggested that Mr. Montagu learned about sandwiches from his brother-in-law, Jerome de Sallis, who was born in Grisons Republic. This, the easternmost canton of Switzerland, was already known to have popularly served salt beef, which the 4th Earl of Sandwich favored.

Despite this overdrawn prelude, it is my contention that the who and what of the first sandwich do not get us terribly far (even if answerable). Should we worry about whether John, Jerome or Hillel was the first? What kind of bread? Filling of what variety? How prepared? Such questions are largely unknowable,

[24]Morten, Mark. "Bread and Meat for God's Sake", Gastronomica, Vol.3, Issue 2, 2004, pp.6-7. I have relied upon this article as particularly authoritative.

and unless one is a strict prescriptivist, unhelpful. We may imagine a theoretical first sandwich, but such a search tells us more about ourselves then it does about food. I take it as much more interesting to know why it was that the sandwich as "sandwich" entered the public consciousness. Whoever was actually responsible, the important question remains why this particular food at this particular time became so popular, and not merely popular, but iconic. If the pairing of bread and meat had already existed unremarkably for quite some time, then what lead to this pairing of ingredients suddenly earning a name?




OSCAR MEYER'S LINE OF WEINERMOBILES, IN NEAR-CONTINUOUS CIRCULATION ON OUR NATION'S STREETS SINCE 1936

# 5: Money Money Money

So, what is the first sandwich in its *behavior*? Montagu's story makes clear that the food in its origin is a conveyance. It is a means, a mechanism, for directing food toward the belly. It keeps the gumption up whilst otherwise immersed in life's necessities. This first sandwich had little to do with ingredients, and much more to do with how the ingredients were consumed. Thus, the sandwich, far more than any pairing of ingredients, is a vehicle. (It is perhaps not irrelevant that in any urban area worth its salt one can purchase a decent sandwich from out of a *vehicle*, whether a van, truck, trailer or otherwise. I cannot, however, think of any examples of vehicles intentionally designed to look like sandwiches, that is to say, sandwiches that are literally vehicles, with the near-exception of Oscar Meyer's line of weinermobiles, in near-continuous circulation on our nation's streets since 1936.)

The sandwich as vehicle is a means by which satiation is supplied. The fact that the first sandwich contained salt beef, and not, say, knockwurst, is merely an afterthought. Necessity is the mother of invention. Needing free hands, we devise a carrier, or protective outer layer. Viewing the sandwich in this way, it is clear to see that something novel is indeed going on. The food itself is becoming secondary. The activity, in Montagu's case gambling, is primary, while the cuisine is only there to do service. It is not that gambling is itself essential to the appearance of the sandwich – rather the necessary feature is that food is secondary to another activity, and more to the point, that food is secondary to the *means by which it is consumed*.

Given the above, one could take the sandwich as symptomatic of a quickening of life's pace. Seen in this light, the invention of the sandwich may not be a shining moment. Rather, the moment when we learn to turn our attention away from our immediate activity toward something else. Take as an illustration

the role of gambling in English high society. Gentlemen placed wagers with one another obsessively, such that, for a time, gambling was the standard way of whiling away the evening hours. So, the sandwich is invented to fuel gambling, which in turn is relied upon to combat boredom. Does the sandwich now do the opposite? If we now turn to the sandwich, as opposed to some other food, because we're distracted by life's necessities (gambling, work, Facebook, *Jersey Shore*…), then it is curious that the sandwich should have been developed as a means of fueling what itself was already a distraction. Or, perhaps, we are still doing exactly this after all? That we find our distractions necessary may be a phenomena peculiar to modern life. Seen thus, there is a direct uninterrupted line proceeding from the sandwich to those foods now marketed as easier to consume, such as yogurt packaged in a tube, such that one can squirt it directly into one's face without looking up from the tv. That we're all overweight follows necessarily.

Nevertheless, it must be said that banality is no requirement. As we've seen, it is today the case, in America in particular, that the sandwich may be granted an elevated status. For the serious gastronome, it is no longer merely a vehicle, but much, much more. The sandwich can be a singular object of our affection, emblematic of our likes and dislikes, our values, our fragile place within the world, our selves. And is this a celebration of our boredoms and distractions? Of course, and why shouldn't it be? Precisely *because* a sandwich is too often simply a sandwich, our eye is able to see in it something more.

So why did it become a *sandwich* as opposed to bread and meat? Surely this has as much to do with naming as with food. Dissertations are written on the significance of the name, and my comments will be kept but short. But we can conclude without too much quibbling that we name because doing so gives us power. The appearance of the name made possible an activity, behavior, or result not possible previously, and perhaps either not desirable, or not yet conceived of. So what is such an activity, behavior, or result? Why was it suddenly necessary that we name *this* meal? I see three possibilities, concurrent and intertwined:

1. Marketing. You can sell a lot more bread and meat if you have something to call it. At some point, before or after John Montagu first ate salt beef with bread, the gaming clubs of London came to recognize the popularity of bread and meat. To meet demand, the gaming clubs simplified "the same as Sandwich" to sandwich.
2. The naming of the sandwich marks the emergence of a fad. I suspect that in naming this particular pairing of ingredients in this particular way, the dish makes a class jump. Witness its availability already as a street food. However, it is only called by a true and proper name once associated with an Earl. Is it too much to assert that the "bread and meat" vendors preceding Montagu's time were selling food to the

working class (or the lower classes, anyway – not the upper classes)? I'm imagining that the cachet of the Earl's "sandwich", which allowed it to become a fad, was twofold:

a. A man could have his hands free whilst engaged in another activity (already a necessity for the working class, though not due to the distractions of gambling – furthermore, as streetfood, the sandwich could be easily carried away by the purchaser) and
b. One could *play* at being low class. Given that the sandwich, though nameless, was known to exist in various forms for a long time, it is notable that its emergence as a named dish coincides with it's emergence as a commonplace of the upper class.

3. Much can be said, too, of Gibbon's observation that the sight of gentleman dining on sandwiches was "truly English". We might here add that the appearance of the sandwich is coincident with the overt assertion of national identity as reflected in particular cultural practices. We have, I am supposing, an early case of cultural appropriation. At the very least, it would not be a stretch to say that in the sandwich one can see the movement of an unremarkable gastronomical practice to a singular practice, easily identifiable as being associated with a host of culturally significant associations.

With all of these possibilities, we cannot remove the emergence of the sandwich too far from capitalist movement in general. As McDonald's makes obvious, the sandwich is particularly emblematic of the foodstuff as item of commerce. This is certainly true more so than for soup, carrots and peas, or goulash, for instance. The sandwich is portable in more ways than one. It allows money to move through society. The appearance of the sandwich as sandwich, as opposed to as bread and meat is at least emblematic of, if not causally related to, the emergence of a consumer society. Sandwich = $$$, or even more so, food = money, not just the old model wherein food = nourishment.

THE BOOKMAKER'S HABIT OF WEDGING THE SANDWICH INTO THE BACK TROUSER POCKET AND SITTING ON IT WHILE WATCHING THE RACES.

# 6: Of Gambling, Englishness, & Democratization

Casting backwards, one can almost pinpoint the historical moment in which the sandwich matured from light snack to meal proper. Auguste Escoffier's incomparable *Le Guide Culinaire* of 1903, disparages sandwiches, but a few pages later hints at their special place in the canon. Sandwiches he designates as "Savories", regarding which he states, "I consider their use opposed to gastronomical principles, and that they have no *raison d'être* on a good menu."[25] Nevertheless, not to leave the custom ignored, a few recipes are listed. Those he enumerates are intended as light snacks, but he goes on to describe one particular English sandwich "which might, in an emergency answer the purpose of a meal". The recipe is peculiar, and deserves to be quoted at length:

> *"Take a small loaf of bread, cut off its two end crusts, then split in half leaving on them about one-third inch of crust. Butter these large slices. Meanwhile grill a thick steak, well seasoned with salt and pepper. When it is cooked, cool it; sprinkle it with grated horse-radish, and mustard, and lay it between the two slices. Tie the whole together as for a galantine, and wrap it in several sheets of blotting paper. Then place the sandwich under a letter-press, the screw of which should be gradually tightened, and leave the sandwich thus for one half-hour."*

Several points need mention. Significantly, this is the *Sandwich de Bookmaker*, enjoyed by "racing people". In other words, the Bookie's Sandwich! The importance of this should not be underestimated. The gambler's sandwich

[25]Escoffier, Auguste. *Le Guide Culinaire* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2011).

alone, Escoffier thinks, "might" constitute a meal. And clearly, his description tells us that this is a sandwich for a serious diner, as opposed to the finger foods he describes being served at "elaborate functions". The Bookie's sandwich is big and messy (requiring blotting paper, no less); the other savories are dainty. And the non-sequitur use of the letter-press? I haven't been able to identify any other uses of a letter-press in the kitchen, and I can only guess as to its origin. Is this a tool that might have appeared in a turn-of-the-century bookmaker's office? Did Escoffier keep one in the kitchen? Who can say. Other accounts of this sandwich's origins point to the bookmaker's habit of wedging the sandwich into the back trouser pocket and sitting on it while watching the races. In doing so, the juices are squeezed from the meat, and absorbed by the bread. So much for the letter-press.

And as to the persistence of association with gambling, more needs be said. The pairing is enduring, in the American imagination perhaps even more so than the English. Witness for example a scene from Neil Simon's *The Odd Couple*, in which the gathered gamblers have sandwiches: Oscar: "I've got brown sandwiches and green sandwiches. Which one do you want?" Murray: "What's the green?" Oscar: "It's either very new cheese or very old meat." Murray: "I'll take the brown".[26] And note another association with gambling. Whatever we may think of the intelligence of eating the all meat "sandwich", KFC achieved a subtle brilliance with the name Double Down. To double down is to double one's bet, to up the ante. This, of course, is exactly what the Double Down achieves, doubling the meat, doubling the cholesterol, doubling our expectations (and perhaps disgust), and most impressively, doubling the very definition of sandwich – the ante is raised, and we've been double-dared.

So, why gambling? This informal activity allowed the entrance of something that at least initially was unbecoming to those of more genteel sensibilities. In gambling, the Earl of Sandwich was being a wee bit roguish. But notice, eating without knife and fork was every bit as naughty (and can we ask – was there a plate?). It was precisely because he was gambling, and thus already engaged in playing the rogue, that it was acceptable to eat without the standard formality. So, here then is our conveyance. The sandwich allows gambling, which is itself mischievous. And the reverse is exactly correct as well: gambling allows the sandwich, which is itself mischievous. And we're not too far removed here from the moral injunction against keeping one's hands free. In the devil's workshop, sandwiches are served.

If a gentleman were to indulge in a little indiscretion by being at the gaming table, it was no great stretch to introduce an eating practice of the unrefined classes. Had the sandwich been introduced as indicative of a *refined*

[26]The quote is taken from the film, *The Odd Couple*, written by Neil Simon based on his play of the same name. Directed by Gene Saks and released by Paramount in 1968.

way of eating, this should be very surprising. But because it was a food of choice of boys being roguish, it was entirely appropriate. Bread and meat thus becomes appropriated, when *as sandwich* it becomes indicative of *Englishness*. And is it worth noting that English sandwiches, at least until recently, have too often been sorry, pallid affairs? If American sandwiches can be called over-indulgent, then certainly English sandwiches are guilty of the opposite crime: lack of imagination. Explaining this state of affairs would take far more space than we can here afford, but let's hazard a generalization: in England the sandwich remained a means to an end, in America the sandwich became the main attraction. But this is not clear either – note that Escoffier pointed to the hefty Bookie sandwich as an "English" way to eat.

So, how did this rogue's delight become mainstream? To enter polite society as an acceptable dish (and as Escoffier makes clear, the transition in his day had not been fully made) the sandwich had to stay small and refined – thus acceptable not only for the gents when they're playing, but for the ladies at society functions as well. But sustenance for the masses, the "sandwich" was not, or at least not yet. The appearance of the Bookie Sandwich tells us that the working class just went on eating bread and meat, and in sufficiently hearty fashion to constitute a "meal". At some point, the moniker filtered outward, the trickling down of a fad from the elite to the commonplace. The sandwich is now that most plebian of foods, and its success is evidence of our own democratization – this ambrosia of royalty can now be purchased pre-packaged at every corner superette. And clearly, the success of the sandwich has to do not only with its inherent efficiency, but also with its association with minor, but appealing, forms of vice.

# 7: Sandwiches of the Future

If the sandwich is indicative of social conditions, as Escoffier's account reveals, then one needs to ask whether those same social conditions are necessary for the sandwich's identity as such. Is a sandwich only a sandwich if it occupies a particular nexus of capitalism and democracy, class tension and appropriation? Is the *meaning* of a sandwich the same as for mere "bread and meat"? And finally, what of the individual diner and her relevant attitudes, intentions, and tastes? If sandwiches are indeed indicative of social or historical facts on the ground, then do we as eaters need to know any of this?

The sandwich as such appeared because of its portability, its marketability, and the ease afforded to consumption (and certainly tastiness, too). These traits are still to some extent characteristic of the sandwich, but the premises are not exclusive. We excluded these traits as premises for the reasons hinted at: they're not objectively physical traits (what Wimsatt and Beardsley might call *internal*[27]), but experiential, and thus, to some degree, relative. For instance, what counts as portable for one person may not for another. Now, we could claim that portable implies what any "reasonable" person considers portable, but this opens the door to many problems of vagueness. And remember, *The Giant Jam Sandwich* was ultimately portable, too.[28]

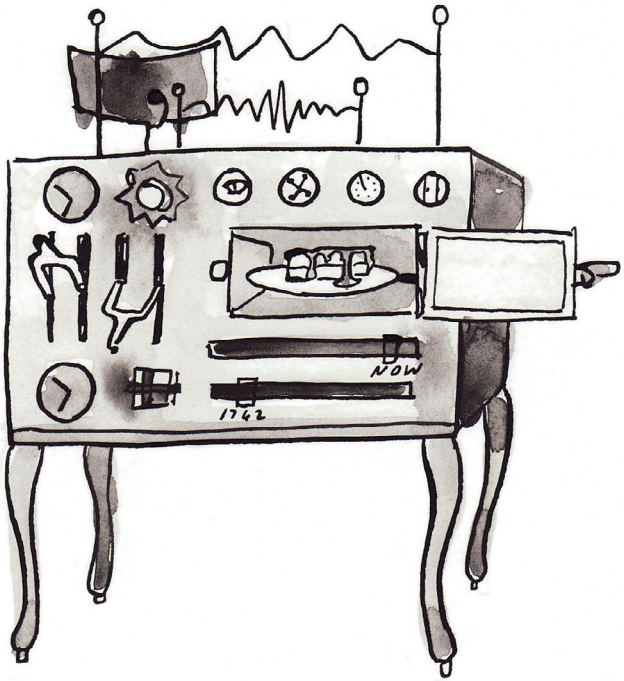
We do not today think that efficiency, either, necessarily supervenes upon the physical characteristics. A non-portable sandwich, a French dip for instance, is still a sandwich, John Montagu's tidy snack notwithstanding. (Though, at the

[27]Wimsatt, W.K. & Monroe Beardsley. "The Intentional Fallacy", *Sewanee Review*, Vol.54 (1946) 468-488.

[28]Lord, John Vernon & Janet Burroway. *The Giant Jam Sandwich* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1972).

same time, we are always trying to find new ways of making eating yet more efficient. And how American is this, to stamp out undue wasted time even in our lunch? If you've eaten at McDonald's you'll have noticed the particular "pre-chewed" quality of the meat. This is presumably no accident on the part of McDonald's - rather, it allows us to eat faster, so that we just might eat more.) Plenty of equally portable foods, undoubtedly inspired to some degree by the market success of sandwiches, such as tacos, burritos, wraps, or even energy bars, are non-sandwiches (though one can imagine a Clif Bar sandwich…). When people began eating and talking about sandwiches, they meant more than just the convergence of bread and meat; they also meant all these other ephemeral traits, too. But how ought we regard such traits now? Are they necessary and sufficient? Consider the Americanization of the sandwich (and what dish is more iconically American, made all the more American for its non-American origins?). While the Sandwich sandwich (or same as Sandwich) is invented as an expediency, allowing food to be eaten with hands alone, in the recent American context, the sandwich has grown increasingly enormous, overflowing with fillings. Precisely because Americans demand so much filling, two separated slices of bread are often no longer able to contain the beast, and the sandwich becomes no longer portable. Witness the Maid Rite, a simple sandwich popular in Iowa consisting of loose hamburger meat on a bun. This is typically served in a wrapper, but with a spoon. The sandwich is unwrapped and eaten with the hands, but so much filling comes out onto the wrapper, employed as a plate, that a utensil is required to eat the remainder. We're stretching the boundaries of portability. If we allow such foods to be included as sandwiches, then we have migrated very far from our original manifestation in 1762.

So, what constitutes a sandwich now may not necessarily have been recognized as such by the gamblers at the London Beefsteak Club in the 1760s. The sandwich proof is an attempt to define a sandwich in the present day, and not a Sandwich in Montagu's day. Can a deductive demonstration be given for a Sandwich with a capital S? Probably not, as our primary sources are scant. There is an underlying problem which needs to be noted here: any "sandwich proof" such as the one I've constructed attempts to be a closed system: any particular food item in question either conforms to the constraints of the proof or it does not. However, the fact that I'm not limiting the sandwich definition to its original incarnation at the Beefsteak Club indicates that I'm proposing a definition that can be altered as attitudes and eating habits change over the gradual course of time. There should be a recognizable line (or, more properly, a ray extending to the future) connecting Montagu's Sandwich to today's Roti John (to take an example) even if the beginning point and the point occupied by the present time are unrecognizable to each other. The bottom line is this: the proof proposes to define a sandwich now, but not necessarily in the past, and not necessarily in the indefinite future. What is rejected is any sandwich definition strictly reductive to



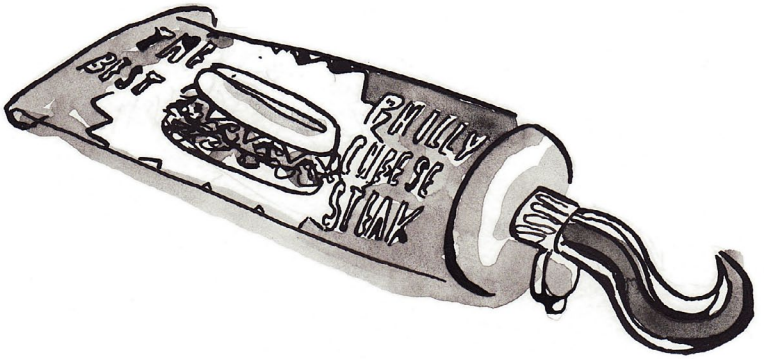

A VINCE SANDWICH, GRILLED CHEESE SLATHERED IN GRAVY, IS TRANSPORTED BACK IN TIME TO, LET'S SAY, 1762

the presumed "authenticity" of a particular moment in history.

The intentional fallacy is the mistake of presuming to know an artist or author's (or chef's) intentions. It is relevant in two respects: 1) We need to warn away the compulsion to authenticate. If one presumes that the only "true" sandwich is one that adheres to a strictly defined original sandwich, then we presume to know definitively what the first sandwich consisted in, which, as we've already discovered, is not knowable. This spectre of "authenticity" haunts our eating habits more than any other aspect of modern life. Think off the top of your head how many restaurants make claims to serving "authentic" food? The answer: all of them. 2) We need to warn away the presumption to know a person's intentions, whether the preparer of a sandwich, the diner, or John Montagu himself. It is probably a mistake to think we can know the intentions of anyone involved in the sandwich making process, sandwich maker, sandwich eater, or observers in the room. Suppose these intentions do not coincide: is it still a sandwich if the chef thinks so, but the diner does not? Vice versa? Neither, but a third party observer does? For instance, if I'm eating crème brule, but I call it a sandwich, then I'm just plainly incorrect. And further, even if I really do think that crème brule is a sandwich, I'm wrong. The intentions are inconsequential.
Imagine two experiments with a time machine: in the first, consider an obvious exemplar, an egg salad. An egg salad sandwich transported from today's delicatessen to 1750, before the advent of the "sandwich", is no longer a sandwich. But this is so only because the word for just what that egg salad concoction is does not exist yet. In a few years, the egg salad non-sandwich will become a sandwich. But now consider a more telling example, a Vince Sandwich, grilled cheese slathered in gravy, is transported back in time to, let's say, 1762. This same Vince sandwich, even if served at the London Beefsteak Club, would be unrecognizable as a sandwich. And, we can go further. Not only would it not be recognized as such, it simply wouldn't *be* a sandwich, even while having the same physical properties as its present day incarnation. The imagined food would undergo a kind of transubstantiation, but instead of bread becoming flesh, bread, cheese and gravy becomes a sandwich.

Consider the context and the malleability of "sandwichness" in the following examples:

1. Imagine a *World Without Us* scenario, in which humans disappear from the Earth. Any sandwiches left behind are no longer sandwiches, as the social context that makes them sandwiches fails to exist. But do we want to say that a sandwich left in an empty room *isn't* a sandwich, because no one is thinking about it? No, a single forgotten sandwich




THIS IS BOTH AN AWFUL IDEA AND A NON-SANDWICH

remains a sandwich.[29]

2. Salt beef and bread, sandwiched, but eaten by hungry Cro-Magnons, are not sandwiches. Well okay, they *could* be sandwiches, but, again, only if the whole range of social conditions that we've been discussing were also in place. For instance, did the Cro-Magnon gamble?
3. An indiscernible counterpart dilemma: imagine that the chefs at the London Beefsteak do come up with a Vince (which would not be identified as a sandwich), but through a mix-up with a time machine it gets swapped with an identical Vince from the deli at No Frills Supermarket in Blair, NE (the location upon which I witnessed the creation of the Vince). Both sandwiches, though indistinguishable, change status. The Vince from the Beefsteak club becomes a sandwich and the Vince from Nebraska becomes a non-sandwich, though in the eating, no difference would be detectable.[30]
4. There is an increasing preponderance of foods packaged in tubes for our convenience: yogurt, peanut butter and jelly swirled together, Mexican candy, Aquafresh. Suppose in some future universe, some entrepreneurial spirit manages to squeeze a Philly cheesesteak into a tube. If you, dear reader, have discovered this book in the future, where this idea has met with wide acceptance (it will be), then you already know that this is indeed a sandwich. For those of you reading in the present, you've been warned; this is both an awful idea and a non-sandwich.
5. The Double Down is not a sandwich, but some people, KFC included, do (incorrectly) refer to it as a sandwich. Might the accepted definition of sandwich shift over time such that anything taking that basic form (two slabs of meat "sandwiching" a filling) will in the future be recognized as a sandwich? If common usage drifts in this way, the Double Down will be a sandwich. But if such double-downification does occur what will be the status of today's sandwiches? Will, for instance, a watercress and spring onion sandwich need to be served between slices of deep-fried meat in order to be considered a member of the category?

But the following is a hypothetical demonstrating a successful sandwich. Imagine two trucks colliding on the highway, one from the Old Home Bread factory, and the other from Oscar Meyer. In the mayhem and ensuing debris, sheer improbable chance conspires to bring bread and bologna together,

[29] Weisman, Alan. *The World Without Us* (NY: Thomas Dunne Books / St. Martin's Press, 2007).

[30] Apologies to Danto, Arthur. *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 1981.

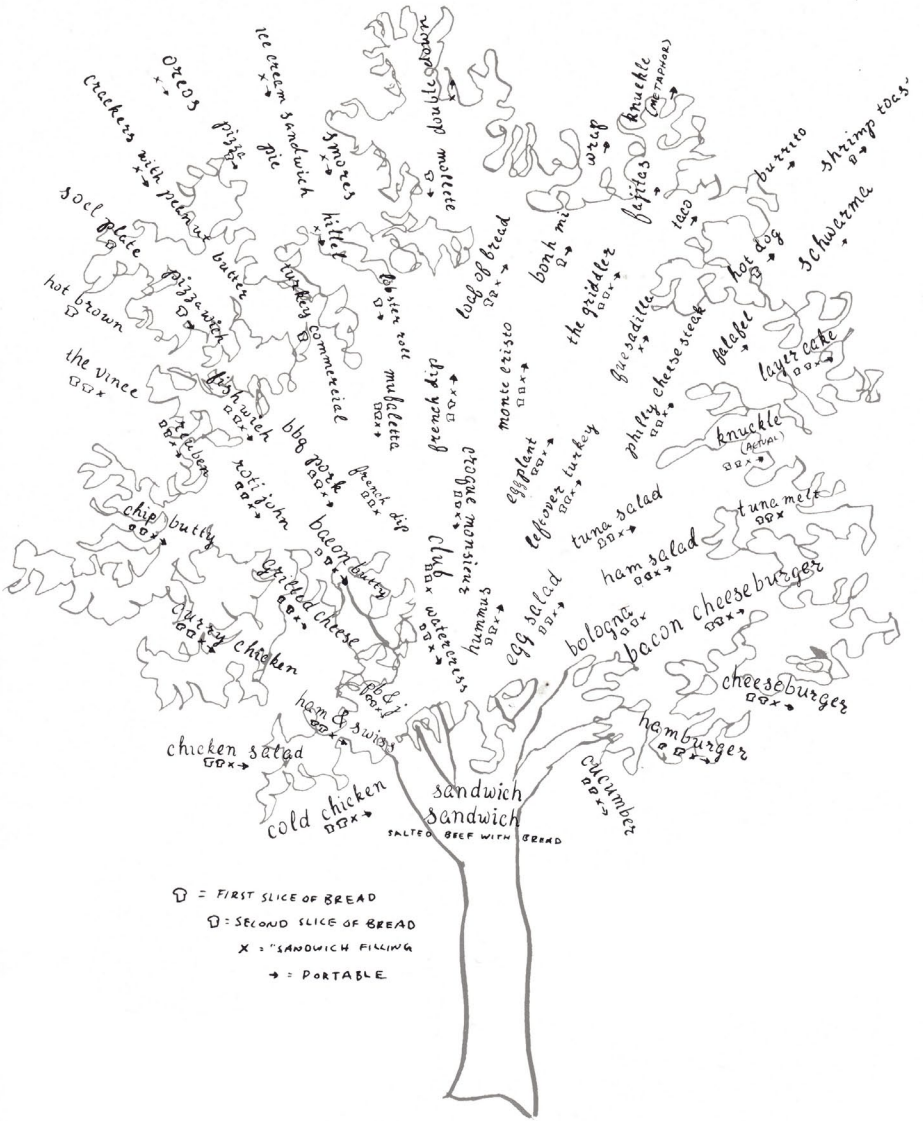
sandwiched and resting on the highway. Is the result a sandwich? Yes. So, a sandwich need not be *intended*.

The bottom line is this: a sandwich as we know it must indeed consist of a set of objective and empirically verifiable physical characteristics, but we only identify such characteristics as necessary because it is precisely these physical characteristics which have social meaning today. Thus, while a grinder served on one continuous piece of bread is not fully a sandwich, it may *become* a sandwich. That is to say, if we move closer and closer to broad popular acceptance of the "sandwich" served on one piece of bread then it may in the future be in fact a sandwich (despite the lack of sandwiching). Meaning is not eternal.

Sandwiches, then, are representational. But because metaphors are subject to our own collective thinking, which is itself subject to the vagaries of history, a sandwich for Montagu ≠ a sandwich today ≠ a sandwich in 2022, when we're all eating Soylent Green from corn-oil derived edible tubes. Consider the graph on the following page, depicting an historically cast family resemblance theory of sandwiches. At Montagu's end of the spectrum, the sandwich consists of a set of properties both internal and external which are not entirely duplicated in the sandwiches of today. The descendants of the sandwich have branched outward in a scattershot, unpredictable pattern, such that there is now much greater diversity of dishes accepted into the genealogy, such that if there were a sandwich family reunion, it would be full of awkward cousins with strange accents, barely recognizable to one another. With each ensuing year's reunion, there will be less and less resemblance, and any singular identifiable thread connecting all the members will be harder and harder to find, until it disappears entirely. Instead of a singular identifiable sandwichness, we have the overlapping of many sandwichnesses. But remember, Ludwig Wittgenstein, who is credited with developing the family resemblance theory of aesthetics (though he referenced Nietzsche) was also aware of its limitations: "But if someone wished to say 'there is something common to all these constructions – namely the disjunction of all their common properties' – I should reply: now you are only playing with words. One might as well say: 'something runs through the whole thread – namely the continuous overlapping of those fibres."[31]

A note about the graph to the right: it is not properly a family tree, as there are not necessary connections of lineage between individual sandwiches. The graph is an attempt to paint a broad family resemblance, in which the cluster at the trunk of the tree, representing early sandwich forms, is uniform, while the upper branches, representing recent additions to the family, are increasingly heterogeneous. The sandwich traits included in the graph, bread′, bread″, filling, and portability, I do not take to be those traits required of a sandwich today, as made explicit in the proof earlier. In particular, the inclusion of portability marks

[31] *Philosophical Investigations* trans. G.E.M. Anscombe (NY: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1958).


Oreos
ice cream sandwich
pizza
pie
Crackers with peanut butter
s'mores
dulce de leche
moelleux
sock plate
pizzawich
hot brown
turkey commercial
lobster roll
hillbilly
bag of bread
bánh mì
wrap
fajitas
knuckle (METAPHOR)
burrito
shrimp toast
taco
hot dog
schwarma
the griddler
guacadillo
philly cheese steak
falafel
layer cake
the vince
fish wich
monte cristo
mubaletta
french dip
knuckle (ACTUAL)
reuben
bbq pork
eggplant
leftover turkey
tuna melt
tuna salad
roti john
chip butty
bacon butty
Grilled cheese
Club
croque monsieur
ham salad
bologna
bacon cheeseburger
cherry chicken
watercress
hummus
egg salad
cheeseburger
ham & swiss
hamburger
chicken salad
cucumber
cold chicken
sandwich
Sandwich
SALTED BEEF WITH BREAD
= FIRST SLICE OF BREAD
= SECOND SLICE OF BREAD
X = "SANDWICH FILLING
→ = PORTABLE

a move away from objectively physical traits. A similar graph could have been made mapping any variety of traits – you can choose your favorites. I chose these as an instructive way to explain family resemblance.

# 8: The Crust

Are we any closer to divining the *meaning* of a sandwich? Perhaps. Consider the following bizarre footnote to the food's history. In 2004 the North Korean state media announced that Kim Jong Il had invented a new food, the gogigyeopbbhang, or "double bread with meat", which would now be available to North Koreans. In other words, the Dear Leader himself invented hamburgers. The claim is almost too strange to be laughable, but one can see the obvious political reasons why, if North Korea wanted sandwiches, they had to be invented anew, rather than adopted from American imperialists. But notice, Kim Jong Il, in all his insight, did recognize the particular significance of a crucial feature of the sandwich: the *doubling*.

Without question, essentialism must be avoided here, but we can correctly identify the notion of doubling as a close approximation of what the sandwich is and what the sandwich does. Take as representative the "double roti". The expression double roti, common in parts of India, indicates a sandwich, particularly on Western-style, or leavened bread, having a variety of fillings. When sandwiches were first introduced in India, they were made with two pieces of roti, a traditional Indian unleavened bread. A double roti, then, was made with two roti. Now, double roti more commonly refers to any sandwich in the Western style, particularly because leavened bread is taken to be double the thickness of roti. Here we have, in fact, a double doubling – the bread is doubled twice.

Notice the excess of such a construction: bread with topping is no longer sufficient, and merely adding more topping won't do the job. And instead of just eating two separate rotis with topping, they are doubled together. I identify something quintessentially human about this desire to locate the limits of what is possible with the materials at hand. The sandwich is a *dare*. Recall, for instance, the childhood urge to bake all the dough into one enormous cookie? Does not

THE GOGIGYEOPBBHANG, OR "DOUBLE BREAD WITH MEAT"

the sandwich today accomplish something similar?

Doubling is not a pairing of opposites or complements, as in yin and yang, but a repetition. (Notice Manhattan's former twin towers, for instance – a single tower would have been merely a skyscraper, but two towers are iconic. And Gilgamesh is merely a tyrant until he meets Enkidu, his double. After meeting Enkidu, he becomes himself.) One mark of the success of our sandwich proof is whether it identifies this feature of the sandwich. In terms of the physical description of objective properties of doubling, our proof succeeds nicely (for instance we reject smørrebrød and the tartine). What remains is whether our proof allows for the contextual associations that doubling inspires, for instance, American excess, gambling, self-reflectivity, Warholian repetition of images, and so forth – you can add your own association here:_____.

The creators of the Double Down doubtless realized, whether consciously or not, that the iconic significance of the sandwich is precisely in the doubling, though indeed it may be a bet too far. The Double Down is the self-defeating apotheosis of the sandwich, because it doubles the very concept, turning back upon itself in parody. There is certainly a human inevitability to making such a food, but we may be yet reluctant to actually eat one. For this reason the Double Down is more an object of experimental art than an actual food.

We began with the consideration of the sandwich as an *object*. We're in good company in this assertion; even the compendious *Oxford Companion to Food* describes the sandwich as "indeed an object".[32] But hidden in *Oxford's* description is the slipperiness of objects, the sandwich included. Objects don't stay in one place for long, either historically, or in our imagination. This is, of course, confounding, because objects seem to report solidity, in their very extension and, further, even in their meaning. And indeed, if to sandwich is in some sense to double, then we have an object never content to remain as it is. It grows continually beyond itself. Perhaps because the sandwich as object is, even in the imagination, formed by our own appetites. We can't separate the object of study too far from our own desires. A virtue of the sandwich is the ease with which it attracts variations. The sandwich is a playground for the logician and the chef.

At the outset of this monograph, I had privately committed to avoidance of a celebratory tone. Too many books celebrate food with beautiful glossy photographs, but complete absence of anything probing to say. But in spite of my better judgment, I find that myself drawn to the wonderful logical malleability of the sandwich. Our subject brings an irresistible confusion to the distinction between signifier and signified. We find only fleeting semantic security for the word, and indeed the concept, we initially set out to define. At the same time, meaning is not lost; we catch a taste of it, between bites, as our appetites continue to change.

[32] Jaine, Tom, ed. *The Oxford Companion to Food*, 2nd ed. (NY: Oxford University Press, 2006), p.692.

PHILOSOPHY

Can anything be so common as a sandwich? Two slices of bread and a filling. Everyone knows a sandwich when they see one. But what of the quesadilla, the pizza slice, a hot dog, a birthday cake? Are these sandwiches too?

Using the methodology of deductive logic, with charming illustrations provided by Ginny Maki, Jensen looks at the sandwich as object of art, existential interlocutor, and source of unexpected meaning. *There Exists an X* formally delineates our everyday experience of sandwiches. In doing so, Jensen poses a fundamentally philosophical question about definitions and logic. Everyone thinks they know what a sandwich is but we do not generally talk about it. Here is someone who really does want to talk about sandwiches—not generally but in specific detail. And in doing so Jensen provides an entertaining way of viewing the logic and mathematical quality of human experience.

What do we see in the gas station crackers? Something familiar? Something illustrative? Something meaningful?

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